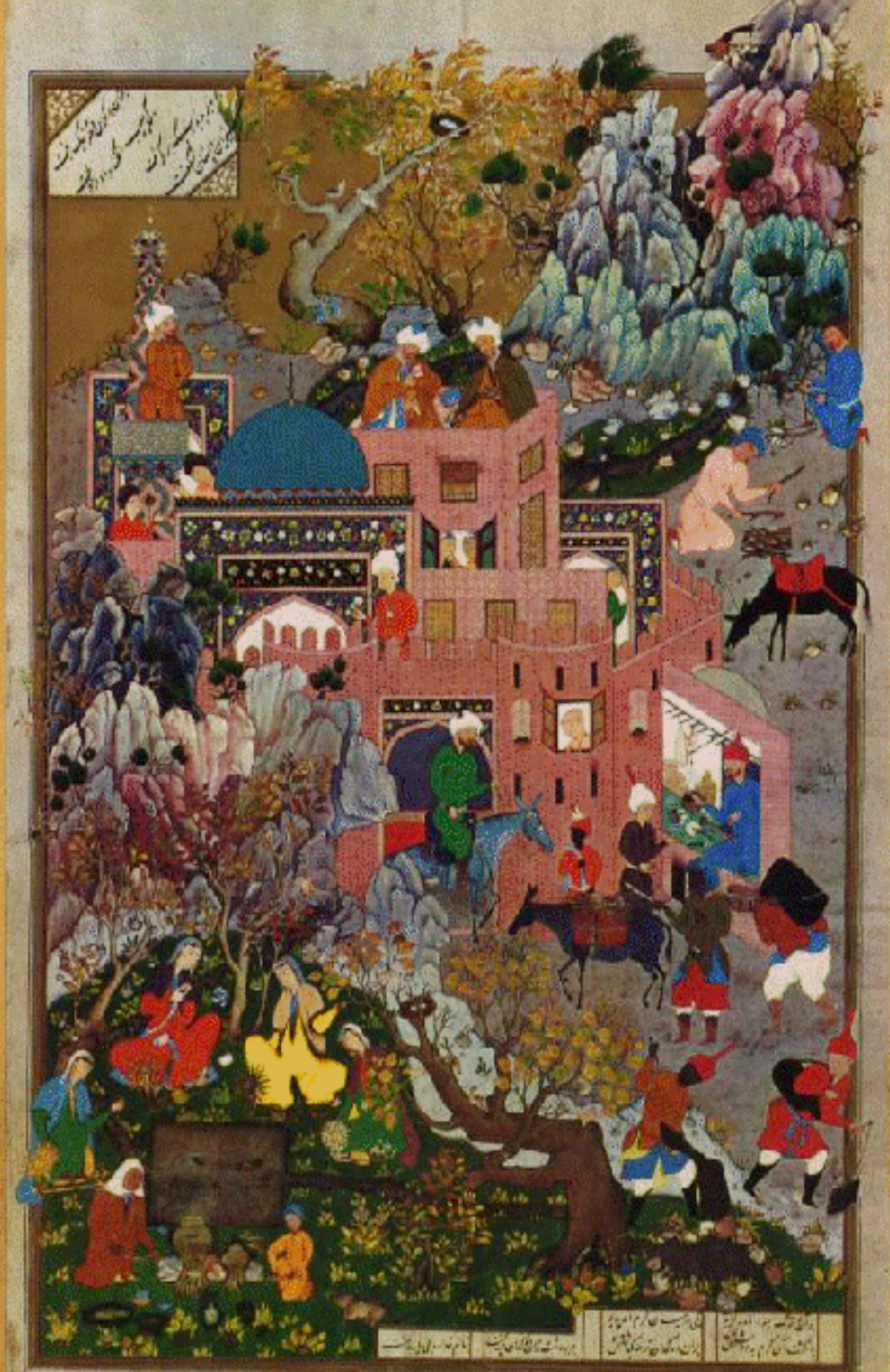

The radiated Figure on the Tak-i-Bostan (Reproduced by kind permission of Messrs. Macmillan & Co., Ltd., from "Persia Past and Present," by A. V. Williams Jackson).

(See Chap. X.)

# CULTS & LEGENDS
# OF
# ANCIENT IRAN & CHINA

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"BERAMJI MANSIONS"
SIR PHEROZSHAW MEHTA ROAD,
FORT, BOMBAY.

PUBLISHED BY M. J. KARANI
SIR PHEEROZSHAW MEHTA ROAD; FORT, BOMBAY.

PRINTED BY P. C. APPOO, AT THE NEW ART PRINTING PRESS
No. 12-14 CUSTOM HOUSE ROAD, FORT, BOMBAY.

TO

THE MEMORY OF

MY FATHER AND MOTHER

ON WHOSE KNEES I LEARNED

TO LOVE THE LORE OF ANCIENT IRAN.

# PREFACE.

The first six papers contained in this volume deal with the thesis of the exchange and transmission of legends between ancient Iran and China. For over three decades eminent Sinologists have been discovering points of contact between the two ancient civilisations, and they have dealt in a masterly manner with such contacts in the matter of commerce,, natural history and astronomical ideas. But the study of the transfer and exchange of religious cults and heroic legends between the two neighbouring countries—both of them so steeped in poetry and religion—has yet to be prosecuted. I have ventured to draw attention in this book to some remarkable parallelisms and analogies between the myths and legends of the two nations. To facilitate the investigations of those who would examine these analogies I have prepared a brief list of them with references which will be found immediately after this preface. It is noteworthy that this Sino-Iranian analogues are to be found not only in the sphere of epic narratives but in religious cults too. Thus on the one hand we have close analogies between the episodes of King Kawoos and the Emperor Chou Wang (pp. 153–158), of Sohrab and No-Cha (pp. 118–123), of Rustam and Li-tsing (pp. 4–7), of Kereshasp and the "Divine archer" Yi (pp. 20–24)—to mention only a few. On the other side we have very similar cults of the mountains, and the Royal Glory (pp. 144–149), of the waters (pp. 137–144), of winds (pp. 8–12) and of birds (48–56). Any one, for example, who reads

about the related cults of the mountains and of the royal glory in the Zamyād Yasht will find himself on familiar ground when reading Chinese accounts of "the regulating virtue" of dynasties and of its relations to the holy mountains which formed the boundaries of the ancient Chinese empire. The accounts of the spirit, palace and worship of waters contained in the Âbân Yasht have many parallels in the beliefs and ritual relating to the Chinese goddess of waters. Still closer resemblances crowd on us when we study that most interesting collection of cults which is comprised in the Bahrâm Yasht.

Nor do these three great Yashts exhaust the tale of interesting analogies of religious cults. As we look over the Sraosha Yasht we are surprised by the close parallelisms between the accounts of the character the tasks and the locations of the Iranian "priest-god" (so designated by Prof. Williams Jackson) and the Taoist personification of saintship, (pp. 164–172). Something analogous to the Yin and Yang doctrine is also to be found here (pp. 167–179), while the resemblance between the angel Sraosha and the god Wen-tchong is striking (pp. 180–181). Such close and numerous parallelisms surely prove a diffusion and exchange of religious as well as epic narratives.

The seventh and eighth essays introduce the reader to Parthian legends and heroes. Eminent writers have hinted that a good deal of Parthian history lies hidden —awaiting discovery—in the episodes of the Shah-nameh. "The almost total lack of Oriental material concerning the Parthian" history has been remarked

by high authority; and it is of the utmost importance to find out any such material remaining disguised in ballad or epic. I have put forward the view that in Firdausi's accounts of the exploits of the heroes Farud Gudarz, Gew, Bezan, and Palāshān are to be found in the histories of the Parthian princes Vardanes, Gotarzes and Volageses I. Indeed I have had the audacity to signalise a romantic incident of Parthian history and to attempt to show that it has been narrated in the immortal pages alike of Tacitus and of Firdausi. Obviously, Parthian ballads lingered long in the memories of the men of Northern Persia—long after the Sassanides had supplanted their Arsacide predecessor—and the last echoes of these ballads linger in Firdausi's great epic. The narrative of Bezan and Manizeh and the episode of the exploits of Gew and Rustam in the hunting-ground of Afrasiyab might indeed represent such ballads as are incorporated almost bodily in the Shahnameh.

Here again we have to note how the Parthian cycle of historical legends got mixed up with the Sakœan legends—and how the adventures of Gudarz (Gotarzes) and his family get inextricably mixed up with those of Rustam. That brings us to the subject of our eighth essay or chapter. There is nothing to be wondered at in this mixture of sagas; for it can be shown from history that the Parthian and the Saka had often to fight shoulder to shoulder—and sometimes indeed, back to back—against the invasions of Kushan and other northern invaders. Further, the main *historical* exploit of Rustam, narrated in the Shahnameh, is

his fight with the Kushans by the side of Parthian princes. It is important to note that the reigns of of Gotarzes and Volagases I, cover the period from about A.D. 40 to A.D. 77. Thus the rise of Kadphises the Kushan to the headship of the Great Yueh-Chi was contemporaneous with the accession of Gotarzes to power. Then followed a succession of great Kushan princes whose growing power must have oppressed Sakastan on the one hand and Parthia on the other. The Yueh-chi as we know were driving the Saka to the south. Under such circumstances we can well imagine why Rustam figured as the ally of Gotarzes and his family—his "seventy strong sons" as Firdausi calls them. That family fell in the struggle with the nomad invaders, and Hyrcania fell away from Parthia as the classical historians inform us. Here was the moment for the appearance of the historical Rustam both to assist the falling fortunes of the house of Gotarzes and to undertake a campaign in Hyrcania (Mazendaran). From this we can determine an approximate date for the exploits of Rustam and we can also appreciate his role as one of the great Parthian viceroys or "wardens of marches" who dominated the Partho-Indian provinces and who attained almost royal power and prerogative.

In the next contribution—the ninth of the series—we pass on to consider another cycle of heroic legends, viz., those relating to Azi Dahāka. The problem discussed there is why the first historical king of Media came to be the centre of a terrible halo of the most sombre legends which were drawn not only from Aryan but from Babylonian and other sources. That study

leads us to consider incidentally why just the opposite treatment was reserved for another King of the Median line—Huwakhshatara.

The last paper was the one written earliest and differs from the rest in not treating of any cults or historical legends. It deals with the problem of the identity of the radiated figure on the Tāq-i-Bustan. It has been identified by many with Zarathushtra and by others with Mithra. I have attempted to show that the figure was meant to represent the angel Bahrām (Verethraghna). Prof. Jackson has observed some years ago that the whole subject of the identity of the figure "required further investigation." I am happy to find that my suggestion has been favourably received by many savants; and I hope that it will contribute to that comprehensive study of the subject of which the necessity has been so justly emphasised by Prof. Jackson.

It is not given even to eminent savants—let alone to a humble gleaner in the field like myself—to handle topics so large and varied as those referred to above, without falling into errors. I shall be only too happy if my theories and suggestions are appraised and criticised by those experts who have a right to sit in judgment upon such studies. Only in view of the dicta pronounced already by so many eminent Iranists and Sinologists on my contributions, I may be found to have performed some service in initiating the comparative and fruitful study of the cults and legends of ancient Iran and China. If I have been able to render such a service, and if I have contributed to a deeper

historical analysis of the vast and many-sided material upon which the Shahnameh has been based I shall be amply rewarded for some years of work.

I am deeply indebted to distinguished Iranists like Professors Williams Jackson and L. H. Gray, as well as to illustrious sinologists like Professors Goodrich, Krause and Laufer for much generous attention and constant encouragement. I have also to express my obligations to the Asiatic Society—in whose Journals and Proceedings these studies were first published—for permission to reprint them; and to its capable secretary Dr. John Van Mannen who is ever ready to forward the cause of research. Finally, I have to thank my publishers, Messrs J. B. Karani's Sons for their care, zeal and despatch in publication and Mr. J. B. Vakil for his assistance in correcting the proofs.

J. C. Coyajee.

29, Ridge Road,
Malabar Hill, Bombay.
21st March, 1936.

## A list of the chief parallelisms between Iranian and Chinese cults and legends.

For the convenience of readers whose main interest lies in the field of the cultural and religious contacts of Sino-Iranica the following brief list is added with references to the relevant pages of this book :—

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(2) Rustam and Li Tsing, pp. 4–7

(3) Sohrab and No-Cha pp 116–123

(4) Keresasp and the Divine Archer Yi. pp 20–24

(5) A legend of King Faredun pp 151–153

(6) Haftwād and the Golden Caterpillar pp 34–40

(7) The Combat of the Eleven pp 126–128

(8) Poladwand and the magicians of Po-lu-tao pp 123–125

II Cults

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(2) The cult of waters pp 137–144

(3) Cults of birds pp 46–56; 122; 151

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(7) The sacrificial horse pp 59–60

III Angelology and Demonology

(1) The angel Bahrām and Tcheng Hoang pp 64–65

(2) The White Elephant and the "Red Child Devil" p 19–20

(3) The White Demon pp 17–19

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(5) The angel Sraosha and Wen-tchong pp 180–181

The abode of Sraosha pp 164–165

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II The Bahram Yasht : Analogues and Originals

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IV The Shahnameh and the Feng-Shen-Yen-I.

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the Kamak bird (p. 151)—A legend of King Faredun (pp. 151–152)—King Kawoos and the Emperor Chou Wang (pp. 153–158).

VI The Sraosha Yasht : its place in the history of mysticism.

The place of Sraosha in Iranian angelology (pp. 162–163)—The North Pole as the abode of the genius of saintship alike in the Yasht and in the Taoist and Sufi systems (pp. 163–167)—The importance of the idea of Yin and Yang in the Yasht and in the Taoist and Sufi systems (pp. 167–170)—Sraosha as the ideal religious teacher (p. 170)—Characteristics of his "barsom" and Chinese analogues (pp. 171–172)—The chariot and peregrinations of Sraosha and their analogues in Taoism and Sufism (pp. 172–176)—Sraosha as the protector of saints (p. 176)—Youthfulness of the genius of saintship in all three systems (pp. 177–178)—Sraosha and Wen-tchong (pp. 180–181)—The general atmoshere of the Sraosha Yasht (pp. 181–183).

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# 1

# SOME SHAHNAMEH LEGENDS AND THEIR CHINESE PARALLELS.*

Through a considerable portion of the Shahnameh there is a mingling of the heroic sagas of Iran and of Sakistan or Seistan, and Firdausi has given an important place in his epic to the mythology of the Sakas. Indeed, but for the special *milieu* in which Firdausi lived, and the particular locality in and influence under which his work was done, the heroic legends of Seistan might have been lost to the world almost entirely. That loss would have been great, for the Saka myths of Rustam and his family possess marked characteristic features of their own and occupy an important place in the world's cycle of legends.

It is proposed here to demonstrate that there is a close parallelism between the Saka legends preserved for us in the Shahnameh and a number of Chinese legends. On which side the indebtedness was greater it is not possible to say at present, and indeed not until a systematic survey of Chinese legends has been carried out by experts, and their parallelisms with the legends of Seistan and Iran have been fully disclosed. Looking to the cultural greatness of China it might seem

* Issued in the Journal and Proceedings, Asiatic Society of Bengal, 15th August, 1929.

probable to some that Chinese influences were the predominating ones. And yet, the Saka race which dominated Central Asia for centuries and which made a broad and deep mark on the great empires of China, Persia and India must have been possessed of a great and virile individuality; and as it contributed so largely to the store-house of Persian legends it might conceivably have also enriched the mythology of China. Laufer has shown in his study of the Diamond that the Chinese folk-lore was very susceptible to the foreign influence and that there were times when a stream of foreign folk-lore poured into the valleys of China. Indeed, he has emphasised the fact that Chinese culture and beliefs were the result of the contributions of numerous tribes among whom the Saka race would naturally be prominent by its importance and influence. (See also Krause *Geschichte Ostasiens* I 35; Hirth, *History of Ancient China*, p. 70). Again "both the Emperor of China and his restless vassal Kings at different times formed marriage alliances with the nomad princes" (Parker, *A Thousand Years of the Tartars*, p. 5) and such intercourse would favour the exchange of ideas and legends. With its intermediate geographical position between China and Persia the Saka race was very favourably situated either for giving currency to its legends in both these countries or for transmitting the legends of either one of the two empires to the other. In any case we shall find that it is chiefly the Saka legends of the Shahnameh for which we discover paralles in China. The subject of this paper is well worthy of a close study by eminent Sinologists and possesses a great historical value. Here we can give only a few striking examples of the parallelism indicated above.

However, even such a beginning as has been made here will, it is hoped, be of some assistance to the student of the Shahnameh in appreciating how its author envisaged the problems before him and what sort of material he had to assimilate and combine. The parallelisms will show, for instance, how loyally the poet followed his material even when he was not in sympathy with it. Thus, when closing the episode of Akwan Dev the poet lets us know explicitly and definitely his aversion to incorporating such legends of marvels in what he regarded as a sober historical work. In fact he tries to apologise for the inclusion of the tale and to interpret it away*:

خرد کو بدین گفتها بگرود
مگر نیک معنیش می نشنود
تو مردیو را مردم بد شناس
کسی کو ندارد ز یزدان سپاس

Yet, though Firdausi felt such marvels to be out of place in his book, and though he was aware that they excited scepticism and perhaps ridicule at the court of Ghazni, he loyally incorporated them in his work. He has had his reward, since his work became of high value not only to students of poetry and of history but to workers in Sociology. Again, many of us when reading the Shahnameh have wished that its author had endowed Rustam with a less overwhelming might, and thus had rendered his fights less unequal, for then his opponents too could have had a chance. As a work of art the Shahnameh would no doubt have benefited by a

* "Why should the wise man who listens to these verses not follow the meaning? By devils are only meant bad men who are ungrateful to God."

more even balancing of opposed forces. But when we come to study the legends from a comparative point of view we shall soon find that Firdausi could not possibly have done anything of the sort. For Rustam has, really speaking, two aspects in the Shahnameh. On the one hand, he represents the Saka race in its entire history with its wars with China, with the Kushans and with the Scythian races. In his other aspect, Rustam was a demi-god venerated under different names far beyond the bounds of Seistan.

With these remarks we shall now proceed to draw attention to the more striking among the legends as regards which there is a parallelism between the Iranian and Chinese accounts.

### 1. THE LEGEND OF SOHRAB.

The story of Rustam and Sohrab is wellknown to us from the Shahnameh. It was and is equally well-known in China as the story of the fight of Li Ching and his son No-cha. In this instance there is more than a mere parallelism between the accounts, since the Chinese version helps us to fill in a number of hiatuses in the Iranian story, and informs us that the legend had formerly a religious colouring which it has lost in the Shahnameh—having become there an ordinary romance of love and war. Those who desire an outline of the Chinese legend might be referred to Père Doré's *Superstitions en Chine*, Part II, Vol. 9, pp. 553–555 and 569–581, or to Werner's *Myths and Legends of Chinese*, pp. 315–319. The first noteworthy point in our comparison is that while Firdausi makes Sohrab the child of Rustam by an amour in the land of Samangan, the

Chinese myth strikes a religious note from the first by making No-cha the *avatar* of a sage called "the intelligent pearl." Possibly this name might throw light on the etymology of the name of Sohrab. Proceeding further, we find that both versions agree in making the infant hero extraordinarily precocious. According to Firdausi, when Sohrab was a month old he was as big as a child of one year, and that when he reached the age of ten years no one in the land could engage him in fight. In the Chinese account No-cha was already six feet in height when he had attained the age of seven. Another striking analogy between the narrratives to be noticed is in the matter of the bracelet of the younger hero. In the Shahnameh, Rustam had given the jewel which adorned his own arm to his wife to be worn as a bracelet by his son. The Chinese account of the matter is the more striking, in that the young warrior is born with the miraculous bracelet which was entitled "the horizon of the Heaven and Earth," and it was a miraculous weapon wich was successfully used by its owner for the destruction of one formidable foe after another in various battles. This is a great improvement on the story in the Shahnameh in which the bracelet serves no usful purpose except that of a belated and tragic recognition. But we have to remember that Firdausi was writing for a race with more common sense and with less belief in supernatural machinery.

As might be expected, the Chinese version has not failed to reproduce the fine love-episode of Sohrab and the warriormaid Gurdafrid. In the Shahnameh Sohrab besieges a border-fortress and captures the commandant Hajir, upon which the latter's brave daughter sallies

out to avenge her father. The Chinese story has also developed this episode. No-cha defeats the warrior Teng Chiu-kung and smashes his left arm, upon which the latter's daughter comes upon the scene to avenge her father (Werner, *op. cit.*, p. 147), and performs great exploits.

The fight between the father and the son is common to the Chinese and Persian accounts, and there is the further similarity that just as Rustam takes the field on behalf of King Kawoos, so his Chinese counterpart on behalf of the tyrant Chou (Werner, p. 305). Li-ching (the Chinese counterpart of Rustam) is worsted and compelled to flee. In both accounts the father resorts to supernatural help. In the Shahnameh he resorts to prayers which increase his strength materially, while in the Chinese tale he is saved by the intervention of a Taoist saint carrying a magic weapon.

The two versions are thus very similar though the Chinese legend is the better knit and combined. It provides an ethical defence for the unfilial conduct of No-cha in fighting his father. Again, the Chinese legend was bound to end happily since No-cha (unlike Sohrab) is an immortal. Finally while we find that in the Shahnameh, Feramurz (the other son of Rustam) plays no part in the episode (though in the Barzonameh he intervenes effectively in the fight of Rustam with the son of Sohrab), in the Chinese version. Mucha (the counterpart of Feramurz) tries to succour his father when the latter was pursued by No-cha (Sohrab). However, No-cha worsted his brother easily by striking him with a brick of gold which the former

was carrying in a panther-skin. (Incidentally, panther-skin and the brick remind us of the خشت and the ببریان of which we hear so often in the Shahnameh.)

After this crowning combat with his son, Li-ching (Rustam) is raised by the Chinese accounts to the *acme* of his fame and power and was made "Generalissimo of the twenty-six Celestial Officers, Grand Marshal of the Skies and Guardian of the Gate of Heaven." (Werner, p. 319.) Thus we see that with the Chinese (and also perhaps with the Sacæ) Li-ching (or Rustam) was no mere earthly hero but was a demi-God, and the battle between him and Sohrab was a war of giants. In the Shahnameh, Rustam is portrayed with a huge mace, while in Buddhist temples he holds in his hand the model of a pagoda (Cf. Werner, p. 305.) Can it be that the old Saka legend was transformed under the influence of Buddhism into a religious story with ethical bearings?

I have often wondered whether some lines in the Sohrab episode show that Firdausi was dimly aware of the Chinese parallel, counterpart or source, of the story he was narrating. Thus, when Sohrab asks for information from Hajir as to who the great warrior (Rustam) was, he is answered that he was a Chinese hero.*

بدو گفت کز چین یکی نیکخواه
بنوی بیامد بنزدیک شاه
گمانم که ان چنیی ان پهلواست
که هر گونه ساز و سلاحش نواست

* He said: "Recently a friendly warrior has arrived from China to help the King. I believe this warrior, whose arms and accoutrements are unfamiliar to me is that Chinese hero."

It is a very remarkable thing in every one of the legends with Chinese parallels which Firdausi narrates he takes care to include a line or two referring pointedly to China.

In any case, as the result of our study, we find that there is no justification for the regretful self-laudation in which Firdausi indulged (or is supposed to have indulged in the *Yusuf and Zuleikha* ascribed to him). There the poet is made to regret that he had vainly wasted half his life in spreading the fame of Rustam, who had so far only been a Seistani chief, throughout the world.†

که یک نیمه از عمر خود گم کنم
جهـــانی پر از نام رستـــم کنـــم
که رستـــم سـری بود در سیستـــان
مـــن آوردم اورا دریـــن داستـــان

There is no ground whatever for these remarks, in as much as Rustam—under another name—was worshipped beyond the boundaries of Persia or Seistan, and for centuries before Firdausi was born.

## 2. THE LEGEND OF AKWAN DEV.

If the episode of Sohrab is reminiscent at every step of its Chinese counterpart, the legend of Akwan Dev is almost avowedly borrowed from a Chinese source. In a word, Akwan Dev is no other than the

† "I have wasted half my own life in making Rustam famous throughout the world. Rustam was but a petty chief of Seistan; and it is I who have introduced him into this Heldensaga."

Chinese "spirit of the wind." (Cf. Père Doré, *op. cit.*, part II, Vol. 10, pp. 699-707.)

The episode of Akwan Dev in the Shahnameh is a very short one and is easily summarised. A monstrous stag or buck appears in King Kaikhosru's stud of horses and begins to destroy the horses. The stag or buck is of a yellow colour generally but has panther-like spots or streaks on it. As usual, in any case of danger, Rustam is sent for to deal with it; but he finds on approaching the marvellous stag that sword and arrows are of no avail against it since it can change itself into the wind at pleasure. The tired and baffled hero falls asleep, and Akwan—for it was he who had assumed the strange shape—lifts up Rustam bodily into the air whence he drops the hero into the sea. The hero saves himself by swimming and then deals with the demon when he comes upen the latter unexpectedly. I now proceed to show the similarities of this story to the Chinese legends about the god of the wind.

*(a)* First, as to the appearance and characteristics of Akwan: Fei Lien, the Chinese demon of the wind, is said to have the body of the stag, and is about the size of a leopard. He is able to make the wind blow whenever he wishes it. It possesses also a serpent's tail. As regards colour he wears a *yellow cloak* when he assumes the shape of an old man, and it is *yellow* and white when it changes into a sack which exhales wind. (Cf. Doré *op. cit.*, Part Vol. 10, p. 700; Werner, *op. cit.*, pp. 204-5.) All these characteristics are carefully emphasized by Firdausi in describing Akwan Dev.

He speaks twice of the yellow or golden colour and the spots or lines on its body.*

همان رنگ خورشید دارد درست
سپهرش بزراب گوئی بشست
یکی بر کشیده خط از یال اوی
ز مشک سیه تا بدنبال اوی
درخشنده زیرین یکی باره بود
بچرم اندرون زشت بیتاره بود

Nor does the serpentine trait remain unnoticed.†

برون امد از پوست مانند مار
کز و هر کسی خواستی زینهار

It is an interesting matter and well worth noting that while in Chinese myths the wind-demon has the body of a stag, in India Vayu (the wind-god) rides on the back of an antelope. Hence the "Gor" in the Shahnameh, the stag of the Chinese legends and the antelope of Indian mythology all symbolise the wind—very likely because no other animal can represent better the speed and the abrupt movements of the wind.

*(b)* In the second place, whenever Akwan Dev is hardpressed he changes into the wind. Further, it is obvious that it was only a strong wind that could raise an "elephant-bodied hero" like Rustam and hurl him down from thence on land and sea. There could thus be no

* "That buck has exactly the colour of the Sun, as if the sky had painted it with liquid gold. There are long stripes on his body stretching from his black mane to his tail. He was like a shining horse but his body was covered with foul spots."

† "He came out of his sheath or skin like a serpent which terrifies every one."

question of the identity of Akwan with the wind demon. But, as if to emphasize the identity further, in this short episode of three or four pages Firdausi refers in one way or another to "the wind" repeatedly.*

(1) چهارم بدیدش گرازان به دشت
چو باد شمالی بر و بر گذشت

(2) چو باد از خم خام رستم بجست
بخائید رستم همی پشت دست

(3) جز اکوان دیو این نشاید بدن
نباید بر باد تیغی زدن

(4) چو اکوانش از دور خفته بدید
یکی باد شد تا بدو در رسید

Indeed, in the 3rd line Firdausi asserts the identity of Akwan and the wind.

*(c)* But, further, in this case Firdausi is aware fully that he is narrating a Chinese legend and he quotes from a Chinese philosopher the psychological traits of the demon beginning :×

چنین داد پاسخ که دانای چین
یکی داستانی ز دست اندرین

* (*a*) "On the fourth day he was seen raging over the plain, and he passed Rustam with the quickness of the North *wind*."

(*b*) "He escaped like the *wind* from the leathern lasso of Rustam and the latter bit his hands with vexation."

(*c*) "This must be Akwan Dev. It is in vain to try to smite the *wind* with the sword."

(*d*) "When Akwan saw from afar that Rustam was asleep, he became a *wind* and approached the hero."

× He replied that "the Chinese philosophers have written an episode on this topic."

At the end of the story the poet goes further and informs us that the true name of the demon was not Akwan but Kwan or Kuan and that it had been so written in Pehlevi; but since in Persian letters compounds could not be formed at the beginning of words, it was necessary to write the name as Akwan:*

کوان خوان و اکوان دیوش مخواه
ابـر پهلـوانی بگـردان زبـان

Now the name Kwan or Kuan thus emphasized by Firdausi reminds us of Chinese names of gods like Kuan Ti or Kuan Yu (the god of war) and Kuan Yin (goddess of mercy). Akwan might also be a reminiscence of the Chinese expression "Kwei Wang" or "Kui Ong" which means the "Spectre King" (Cf. De Groot, *Religious System of China*, Vol. V, p. 806).

While, however, Akwan Dev is fully identified with the wind-god, there are also old Chinese stories of "were-stags" and "were-bucks" which offer great resemblances to the Akwan episode. Thus "a were-buck most celebrated in China's history" created as much consternation by its appearance in the time of the renowned founder of the Wei dynasty as Akwan had caused at the court of Kai-Khusrow. The warriors of the Wei Court were also at a loss how to seize the were-buck as the latter ran into a crowd of goats and assumed their shape through its magical powers. (De Groot, Vol. IV, p. 211.)

Our suggestion (that Akwan represents the wind-demon) is corroborated when we find that Rustam is

* "If you speak in the Pehlevi accents you should call him Kuan and not Akwan."

not the only Saka hero to whom the feat of overcoming the wind-demon is attributed. Indeed, there was something like a tradition in Rustam's family of fighting the storm-god or wind-spirit. For in Dēnkart (Book IX, chapter 15, section 2) we read of Rustam's great ancestor Kereshasp that "the mighty wind was appeased by him and brought back from damaging the world to benefiting the creatures." Nor is the exploit confined to the Saka heroes. For a purely Iranian hero, Kai Khusro, is said to have transformed the wind into the shape of a camel and to have ridden him. (Dēnkart Book IX, chap. 23; S.B.E., Vol. XXXVII, pp. 224–225.) Consequently, in representing Rustam as subduing the wind in the shape of Akwan Dev we are following the precedents and ideas of the legends both of Sakastan and of Iran.

If the episodes of Sohrab and of Akwan find complete analogues in Chinese mythology, there are legends of the Shahnameh of which particular features point to Chinese parallels or origins. We shall now proceed to consider a few such legends.

### 3. THE COMBAT OF RUSTAM AND ISPENDIAR.

It is well-known that when Rustam was dangerously wounded by Ispendiar in this combat, he had recourse to the miraculous bird Simurgh who took him in one night to a wonderful and immense tree on the shores of the Chinese Sea. The bird instructed Rustam to cut out a specially shaped branch of that great tree and to form an arrow out of it which, when discharged, was sure to enter the eyes of Ispendiar and to destroy him. In course of one night, through the instrumentality of

this wonderful bird, Rustam was both cured of his grievous wounds and armed for success.

Now this story contains a number of features which have striking parallels in Chinese mythology:

*(a)* There is a great number of Chinese legends all dealing with the idea of miraculous trees growing on the shores of the Chinese Sea. The curious reader will find, if he refers to the fourth volume of De Groot's, *Religious System of China*, pp. 294–324, that thirty pages of that great work are occupied by a few selected narratives about such wonder working trees. To put it briefly, there are many trees growing on the shores of the Estern Sea, or in the isles of that sea, which possess wonderful qualities especially those of conferring life, strenghth, health, longevity and even immortality. I shall quote only two stories from out of a large number which resemble the one of Rustam's experience with the tree called "Kaz" in the Shahnameh. Thus, the Japanese hero Sentaro, being on the point of death, summoned to his aid an immortal saint; the saint procured for the hero a *crane* which, *in one night* both carried him across the ocean to the life-giving trees and brought him back (Donald A. Mackenzie, *Myths of China and Japan*, pp. 116–117). The analogies of this story to that of Rustam, who was also carried to this tree and back in one night, are obvious. De Groot also tells of a man, about to die from want and exhaustion, who ate of the vitalizing plant with the result that he found himself much more youthful than before (De Groot, Vol. 4, p. 314). It was just such a rejuvenation that the old and wounded Rustam required; and

it very well might be that in the older version of the story Rustam was cured by eating of the fruit of the "Kaz" tree. This is the more likely, since there was the cult of the Cassia tree in China and the use of Cassia was supposed to give life (Donald A. Mackenzie, *op. cit.*, pp. 141–42, and Laufer, *Sino-Iranica*, pp. 539 et seq.). Very likely the word "Kaz" in the Shahnameh is reminiscent of "Cassia." I venture to suggest that there is a conflict of mythologies in the present legend of the epic. The original legend of the Sacæ very likely was that Rustam was cured of his wounds by resorting to the "Kaz" tree. But there were also the Persian legends according to which wounds were cured by being touched with feathers of the mystical bird (Cf. *Bahram Yashat verse 35.*) The narrative in the Shahnameh combined these two methods of cure and thus made itself acceptable to both races.

*(b)* The association of the bird Simurgh with the "Kaz" tree in the Shahnameh is paralleled fully in Chinese mythology. There the crane is associated with these trees (De Groot, IV, 289). We have already seen how it was a crane which carried the hero Sentaro to and from such trees. The Chinese also believe that cranes are the souls of these old trees and inhabit them. Some of these trees are indeed said to be 10,000 feet high. This reminds us forcibly of Firdausi's description.*

کـری دید بـر خـاک سر بر هـوا

نشستـه بر و مـرغ فرمـان روا

* Rustam saw a "Kaz" tree which was very lofty and on it was sitting the majestic bird.

*(c)* Something might also be said about the peculiar shape of the branch which Rustam was instructed to select for his purpose. De Groot informs us that the bizarre forms which parts of the plants assume promoted in China the belief in the animation of such plants. Rustam's instructions were to select the longest and the straightest branch to form his arrow out of.*

بدو گفت شاخی گزین راست تر

سرش برتر و بنـش بر کاست تـر

Obviously, while aware of the plant-animism of China, the mythologists of Sakistan had drawn the further logical conclusion that arrows made out of the wood of trees would be the more dangerous and effective—being sure to hit the most vital part of the enemy's body.

The forked arrow which Rustam manufactured out of the "Kaz" wood reminds us that to this day in China forked arrow-like pieces of wood are cut out of certain trees to make what we would call "planchettes" out of. The instructions given to-day in Amoy districts to those who would make these "divining pencils" are very similar to those once given to Rustam by the Simurgh, but are only much more detailed. "A natural fork ought to be cut out from the south-eastern side of the tree, where this has always been exposed to the rising and culminating Sun;" the fork must also be cut out on an auspicious day (De Groot, Vol. VI, pp. 1295–96).

* The Simurgh advised Rustam to select a perfectly straight branch of which the top should be very high while the lower end should be nearest the ground.

(*d*) Firdausi speaks of a special cult of the "Kaz" tree.*

چنان چون بود مردم کژ پرست ٭

He speaks of a set of people who worship or practise the cult of the "Kaz" tree. This will not surprise any one who knows what a large place is occupied in the old Chinese literature and belief by myths about the Cassia, the fir, the pine and other rejuvenating trees. Indeed, authors on the subject talk of the "Cassiacult" (D. A. Mackenzie, *op. cit.*, p. 141) and "tree-cult" just as Firdausi spoke of "the worship of the Kaz."

I venture to conclude that the episode of Ispendiar and Rustam contains a very large number of parallels or allusions to the ancient plant-mythology of China.

### 4. THE DIW-I-SAFID.

There is still another legend of Rustam which strongly reminds us of old Chinese myths. When Rustam slays the White Demon he pulls out the liver of the Demon and by means of it cures King Kawoos and his followers of their blindness.†

ز پهلوش بیرون کشیدم جگر
چه فرمان دهد شاه فیروز گر
کنون خونش اور تو در چشم من
همان نیز در چشم این انجمن
مگر باز بینیم دیدار تو
که بادا جهان افرین یار تو

* "Such as is the practice of the people who observe the cult of the Kaz."

† (Said Rustam) "I have cut his liver out of his body: now what are the victorious King's orders?" (Kawoos replied) "Pour some of its blood into my eyes as well as into eyes of my followers, so that we can see you; and may God befriend you."

The Shahnameh does not inform us why the liver of the Demon should be useful in restoring any one's sight—even if the blindness has been brought on by magical spells. For that piece of information we have to resort to Taoist texts where we learn of the ancient Chinese belief that each of the six viscera contains a soul or a part of the human soul (called the "Shen"). Now, we are informed that "the *shen* of the liver passes under the name of Lung-yen or Dragon's smoke, and its cognomen is Han-ming *i. e.*, who holds the Light in his jaws" (*De Groot, op. cit.*, Vol. IV, p. 72). This pronouncement fully explains to us the *rationale* of Rustam's procedure. Since the liver of the White Demon "holds the Light," its application to the eyes of King Kawoos naturally had the result of restoring the eye-sight of the King. Thus, in a number of cases, Chinese myths help us to understand Iranian myths.

### 5. THE LEGENDS OF THE BIRTHS OF ZAL AND RUSTAM.

In the Shahnameh we are told that Zal, the father of Rustam, was born with white hair on his body. This feature of the child so displeased his father Sam that the infant was exposed and saved only through the kindness of the bird Simurgh which brought him up. A very similar Chinese legend is that relating to Hau-ki (see, Legge, *The Shih King*, p. 397). Hau-ki "the first born son came forth like a lamb" (This might have a reference to white woolly hair). As his father "was dissatisfied with what had taken place", he exposed his child to secure his death. He was placed in a narrow lane. But the sheep and oxen protected him with loving care. He was placed in a

forest, where he was met with by the wood-cutters. He was placed on the cold ice; and a bird screened and supported him with his wings. It is true that we have tales about the exposure of Romulus and others; but the Chinese and the Sakistani legends are nearest each other in referring to the woolly character of the child's hair and in attributing the infant's safety to the intelligent activity of a bird.

Indeed, there is a story of the birth of a well-known historical figure of China which combines the marvellous and characteristic features associated in the Shahnameh with the births both of Zal and his son Rustam. The reader is well aware, no doubt, that what is called the Cæsarian operation was necessary before the birth of Rustam, and that Zal was born with white hair on his head. Now, the Chinese account of the birth of the sage Lao Tze the reputed founder of Taoism, informs us that "his mother carried him in her womb for seventy-two years, so that when he was at length cut out of it his hair was already white." Indeed, the name Lao Tze means "Old Boy" and the Saka hero, Zal, according to Firdausi, might well have borne that name. These analogies, I need scarcely add, are most striking and significant (Cf. D. A. Mackenzie, *op. cit.*, p. 299).

### 6. COMBAT OF RUSTAM AND THE WHITE ELEPHANT.

In the Shahnameh, Rustam performs his first great exploit when he was still a child by engaging the White Elephant and destroying him. It is of considerable significance in view of this story to find in Chinese mythology a great combat between the White Elephant and his allies on the one hand and the "Red

Child Devil" and his confederates on the other. In the end the White Elephant and his allies were worsted. (Cf. Werner, *op. cit.*, pp. 283-84). In the Shahnameh Rustam is described as truly a "Red Child" at his birth —having red hair, a red face and hands full of blood. It is somewhat surprising, at first sight, to find the Buddhist mythology drawing so largely on the exploits of a warrior like Rustam for edifying narratives. But then we have to reckon with the ingenuity of Buddhist narrators who could work wonders with the most unpromising material. Further, it was only just that the followers of the great Sakya prophet should avail themselves of the tales of the great Saka soldier.

It is to be noted that while in subduing Akwan Dev, Rustam is conquering the spirit of the wind, in the combat with the White Elephant the hero is triumphing over the demon of the waters. Because, as Father Doré points out, "this Elephant is the subtle and metamorphosed spirit of the water", (Doré, Part II, Vol. 10, p. 796). It is thus that we trace the central idea of the Sakastan and Chinese legends which exhibit their heroes combating the elemental forces of Nature. We cannot, of course, say in which of the two regions such legends originated. It may be that the Saka imagination was appealed to by the story of a fight between the great Elephant and a child and that they incorporated it into the life of their national hero. Or it may be that the legend originated among the Sakas, and was adopted by the Chinese Buddhists "to point a moral and to adorn a tale."

### 7. THE EXPLOITS OF KERESHASP.

The legends of Kereshasp and of Rustam bear a great resemblance to those Chinese myths which

describe the career of Yi the Divine Archer. "To take one example, the hero Kereshasp is said to have slain the gigantic bird Kamak" which overshadowed the earth and kept off the rains till the rivers dried up (S.B.E., Vol. XXIII, p 296 note 2). The "Divine Archer" Yi performed the same feat by killing the extraordinary birds which were blowing out fire and were thus causing droughts, (Werner, *op. cit.*, pp. 181-182). Then, again, the Persian legend describes Kereshasp as slaying the serpent Srobovar "which was swallowing horses and swallowing men" (S.B.E., Vol. XLVII, p. 12). Just so, the Divine Archer "Yi" slew "near the Tungting lake a serpent a thousand feet long who devoured human beings" (Werner, *op. cit.*, p. 181). Lastly, Kereshasp slew the huge wolf Kapod (S.B.E., Vol. XXIII, p. 295) and thereby greatly distinguished himself. This exploit also finds a parallel in the slaying of "the Great Fox" by the archer Yi, (Granet, *Danses et Legendes de la Chine Ancienne*, p. 513 note).

It is curious, besides, that both Kefeshasp and the Archer Yi are represented as having a bad as well as a good side; and not only the glorious, but the inglorious sides of the Chinese and the Persian heroes are similar. Yi is often called "the Bad Archer" because, (*a*) he was "a great eater"; (*b*) because he offered the fat of the animals killed by him in the chase to the deity—an offering not agreeable to the latter; and (*c*) also because he espoused the river goddess Fou-fei, who was of a dissolute character (Granet, *op. cit.*, pp. 512-513 and p. 525 note 5). These charges are the same as

those which were brought against the hero of Sakastan. (*a*) In the Shahnameh, the heroes of the race of Rustam are represented habitually as "great eaters"; (*b*) Kereshasp's soul is represented to be "in a troubled condition" (S.B.E., Vol. XXXVII p. 198), and he is represented as having grievously offended ths god of fire. Just how this offence was given, we are not informed in the Iranian legend. But in the case of the "Divine Archer" we know that his offering was not acceptable to the deity of fire. (*c*) Finally, Kereshasp was undone, because the "pairika Knathaiti clave unto him," just as the marriage with the fairy Fou-fei did harm to the great Chinese archer. We can only conclude by emphasising the extraordinary resemblance between the careers of the Divine Archer and of Kereshasp.

Before we pass on from the subject of Kereshasp, we have to point out that the Chinese legends attribute to that hero's great grand-son Sohrab a well-known exploit of his great ancestor. Various Yashts and Pahlavi texts inform us how Kereshasp fought the sea-monster, Gandarewa, for a long time, and at last seized the latter by his feet and flayed off the skin of the aquatic hero who had terrorised the world from his habitation in the sea Vouru-Kasha (West, Pahlavi Texts II, pp. 369 *et seq.*). This exploit is attributed by Chinese legends to No-Cha (who corresponds to Sohrab, as we have seen). We read that in the regions of the West there was a lake in which lived a dragon who was the King of the waters (this is just what the Avesta texts say of Gandarewa). No-Cha overthrew him and

trampling him under foot tore off the clothes of the monster. But No-Cha then found out that the body of the Sea-monster was covered with scales. It was only when No-Cha tore off these scales that he reduced the dragon to submission (Doré, *op. cit.*, Part II, Vol. 7, pp. 236-237). The Chinese legend is obviously *an interesting variant of the Gandarewa Saga*, but it attributes the exploit not to Kereshasp but to his grandson.

It is not only in the case of Shahnameh legends that we discover Chinese parallels. The Kereshasp-nameh, which is supposed to narrate the exploits of one of Rustam's ancestors and forms therefore a part of the saga of the Saka race, also displays such analogues. Thus, in that work we find Kereshasp going on a long voyage and discovering a great many curious races of men—headless people, people with long arms and legs, people with elephantine ears, etc. Almost all these races meet with thir parallels in the old Chinese work entitled the *Shan Hai Ching* or "Hill and River Classics." In the latter work too we have the same species and varieties of giants, headless people, armless people, long-armed and long-legged people, the one-eyed people, etc., (Cf. Werner, *op. cit.*, pp. 386-390).

It is noteworthy that in the great majority of cases the Shahnameh legends that possess Chinese analogues are those belonging to the Sakistan Saga. This was only to be expected since the Saka race in its migrations as well as through its long stay in the regions of Central Asia came into contract with China. Indeed, the Sakas themselves believed that they were

in a way related to the Chinese; the best proof of this is that their legends make their representative hero Rustam, a grandson of Sin-dukht ("the Chinese girl"). However, there are just a few legends of the purely Iranian Saga which were obviously exchanged with or influenced by Chinese myths. We now proceed to consider a couple of specimens of this variety.

### 8. THE LEGEND OF QUEEN SODABEH

The resemblances between the careers of Sodabeh, queen of King Kawoos, and of the Chinese princess Ta Chi deserve to be emphasized here. Readers of Shahnameh are aware that Sodabeh was a daughter of the King of Hama-waran and was married to King Kawoos of Persia. Later, she fell in love with her step-son Siyawash, and when her love was rejected she tried to slander him in order to bring about his ruin. She further tried to bring about the destruction of Siyawash by attributing to him the parentage of two monstrous children born of a witch. Though Siyawash cleared himself of this aspersion he was persecuted by the step-mother into exile and destruction. To avenge these wrongs of Siyawash, Rustam killed Sodabeh.

Campare with this career of the wicked queen of Kawoos that of the infamous Ta Chi, the favourite concubine of the Chinese King Chou. She conceived a passion for the virtuous prince Po I-Kao and had resort to all sorts of ruses to catch him in her net; but his conduct was throughout irreproachable. Vexed by his indifference, she tried slander in order to bring about his ruin. But her calumnies did not at first have the result she expected. Chou, after enquiry,

was convinced of the innocence of Po. So far, the parallel with the Shahnameh narrative is exact. The only difference is that Ta Chi has Po put to death within the palace (Werner, *op. cit.*, pp. 192–193). The Chinese narrative does bring in here the episode of the monstrous children, but it is introduced in relation to another prince persecuted by the queen. When Tai Sui, the son of King Chou, was born, he looked like a lump of formless flesh. The infamous Ta Chi thereupon informed the over-credulous king that a monster had been born in the palace and the child was ordered to be cast outside the city. He was saved by a hermit and when he grew up he avenged his mother. (Werner, pp. 195–196.)

It is clear that in the Shahnameh Firdausi has combined in Sodabeh's persecution of Siyawash, the infamous treatment dealt out by the merciless Ta Chi to several of her victims. To one more important analogy attention remains to be drawn. In Persia great honours were paid annually to the memory of Siyawash (and perhaps these honours formed the precedent for the annual processions in honour of Hasan and Husain in post-Islamic Persia). In China, too, the youthful victims of Ta Chi received great honours after their death. Po was canonized while Tai Sui has been worshipped since A.D. 1068 (Werner, *op. cit.*, pp. 194 and 196; also Cf. Père Doré, *op. cit.*, Part II, Vol. 10, pp. 822–832).

I have yet to account for my including the story of queen Sodabeh among the legends of the Saka tribe. The reason is that, as the Shahnameh says, Sodabeh

was the daughter of the prince of Hama-waran. Now, we know the long association of the Saka race with Hama-waran. Marquart tells us how the Saka Haumwargah were distinguished from the Saka Tigra-chaudah who lived beyond the Oxus. He concludes that the Hama-waran Sakas lived for centuries between Baktria and Kandahar. (J. Marquart, *Untersuchungen*, pp. 140, 242, 142, 86). It is consequently most likely that Sodabeh was a princess of the Saka race.

In view of this strong probability, the conjecture of Justi that the name Sodabeh is really an Arabic one (Su'da) and has been expanded on the model of the name Rodabeh appears not to be based on any strong foundation. (See Justi, *Iranische Namenbuchs*, p. 312.) If Sodabeh being a daughter of the prince of Hama-waran was a Saka princess, one need not be surprised at the resembalance which her name bears to that of another Saka princess—Rodabeh. Indeed, in these two names might have been preserved to posterity a certain type of female name of the Saka race. Again, Firdausi's account that King Kawoos married a princess of Hama-waran is much more likely to correspond with fact than the version quoted from Masudi and Yaqut that he sought for a wife in far off Yemen; and it is on the authority of these latter historians that Justi bases his conjecture. But is it at all likely that Masudi and Yaqut had access to any more correct accounts of the very remote age of Kawoos than Firdausi had?

In concluding this section of one subject I am quite willing to admit that the *motif* or topic of step-

mother hating or loving her step-son is a fairly common one. But there are two important peculiarities of the legends of Sodabeh and of Ta Chi which mark them out from other stories and indicate that in this case there was either a common source for the legends or imitation or borrowing. These features are the monstrous birth and the cult of the persecuted step-son.

### 9. THE CYPRESS OF KĂSHMAR.

On another interesting point there is such a striking resemblance between a well-known Shahnameh legend, Old Chinese beliefs and the present day beliefs of the descendants of the Sakas ( the people ef Seistan ) that I cannot leave the matter unrecorded. The Shahnameh states that the Prophet Zoroaster planted a marvellous cypress tree which prossessed a heavenly character, great virtues and an enormous size.*

درخت بهشتیش دانی همی
کجا سر و کشمرش خوانی همی
چرا کش نخوانی نهال بهشت
که چون سرو کشمر بگیتی که کشت

In any case there existed a great cypress tree connected with the name of Zoroaster which existed far into the 9th Century of our Era until cut down in A. D. 846 by the command of the Caliph Mutawakkal.

Nor were the ancient Chinese without a cult of Cypress of their own. Thus De Groot quotes the authority Koh Hung to the following effect :—

* "The tree which you call the cypress of Kashmar is indeed the celestial tree. It deserves to be called the celestial tree, for who else has planted such a tree?"

"Among the big trees that grow in the mountains there are some that can speak; but it is not the trees themselves that possess this faculty. Their tsing is named 'clouds Yang' (that is yang of the heavens, shen), and he who calls out this name becomes happy ..... The deepest roots of cypresses a thousand years old have the shape of puppets in a sitting posture, seven inches high. When incisions are made therein, they lose blood, which, when smeared on one's foot-soles, enables him to walk over water without sinking. And he on whose nose it is smeared will, on stepping into the water, see this open before him, so that by that expedient he can abide at the bottom of the deep. Smear it on your body, and this will become invisible, to return to the visible state when it is wiped off. Moreover, such a puppet cures diseases. To this end, scrape off a little from it, inside its belly, and swallow as much of this powder as can lie on the point of a knife. And external swelling pain of the abdomen is cured immediately on such spots of the belly as are rubbed by the hand with the same quantity of scrapings from the corresponding part of the mannikin. Should your left leg be bad, you must scrape a little from the left leg of the puppet, or spurt at it. Again, some scraping mixed into a torch with other ingredients of great power, can light the soil all around in the dark, and, then, if there is gold in the soil, or jade, or any other precious things, the light will turn blue and bend downward, so that you have only to dig on the spot thus indicated te find them. And if you pound a puppet, and swallow ten pounds of the powder, you will

live a thousand years " ( De Groot, *op. cit.*, Vol. IV, p. 287 ).

Such were the wonderful tales believed about the cypress by the Chinese votaries of the cult of the cypress.

Still more noteworthy are the traces of the old cult to be found in the land of the Sakas—among the Seistanis of to-day. I might be permitted to quote from the excellent Memoir on Seistan by Mr. G. P. Tate.

" There are three other remains of well ascertained Zoroastrian antiquity. These are the cypress trees about 2 miles north of the modern village of Darg in the Hokat and about sixteen miles below the town of Juwein. According to tradition they are planted in the " days of Naushirwan. " The cypress is a slow-growing tree—and for these to have attained their present size they must have been planted certainly not later than that period ( some 1,500 years almost ago ) ; and very probably at a much earlier date. Turning again to the life and teachings of Zoroaster, we see that a peculiar significance was attached to this species of the vegetable kingdom.....

" The cypresses of Darg in Seistan were carefully measured by me. I also at first mistook them for plane trees, but the dull and the dark green colour of the foliage assured me of a mistake long before I reached them. The taller of the two trees is not a perfect specimen. Its crown has been broken off; nevertheless it was found to be 64 feet in height. At a height of six feet above the ground its girth was found to be 17 feet. It was in good leaf. From the roots of this tree

another had sprung up which does not attain to quite half of the stature of the parent tree. At six feet above ground the sapling gave a measurement of 12 feet. About two hundred yards to the east stands the butt end of much larger specimen. This imperfect tree at 5 feet above ground measured about 23 feet in girth, and its height is only 25 feet. It is a much older tree than the others. The latter stand on the banks of an old irrigation channel and as their roots conform to the soil banks and bed of the latter the channel must have endured for innumerable centuries and the tree must have been originally planted where it now stands.

The villagers of Darg told me that this variety of cypress may be propagated by means of cuttings, and if so it is by no means impossible that *both the cypresses of Darg in Seistan and of Sangun in Sarhad may have been in this way propagated from the famous tree of Kashmar*, and may have both been planted te commemorate some event of importance in Sarhad and in Seistan, connected with the spread of the doctrines of Zoroaster. A smaller and less perfeet cypress exists in Seistan to the west of the Pariun, which I was told was once a cutting from the trees of Darg. *These trees are undoubtedly regarded with respect if not veneration by the Seistanis* who also hold the kora-gaz variety of the tamarisk family in a similar light. A grove of these trees exists round a shrine (now of a Muhammadan Saint). They are both numerous and of large size. It is said that when any calamity is about to befall the country, one of these trees always falls, and the country folk bring offerings to the shrine in order to avert or minimize the threatened disasters. The shrine and

grove are situated in the Kala-i-Kah district." (Tate, *Seistan*, pp. 188–190).

But the cult of the Cypress of Kashmar is a highly complex one. If it reminds us, on the one hand of the myths about the Cypress which were current in China, Sakastan and in the North-Eastern part of Persia, in its other aspects it has surprising affinities with a very important legend of far-off Egypt. We read in the Shahnameh that King Gushtasp built a great hall round the Cypress of Kishmar, and that on every leaf of the Cypress of Kashmar was to be found the name of that King with an exhortation to him to uphold the faith. Finally we have in the account the statement that in that hall or temple Zoroaster imprisoned the Devil. Now *it is a remarkable thing that every detail of this description of the hall or temple at Kashmar corresponds to the descriptions of the temple of the Sun at Heliopolis in Egypt.*

We shall best study this very interesting topic by taking each detailed feature of the hall at Kashmar and by identifying it with a corresponding feature of the temple at Heliopolis.

(1) The hall at Kashmar was built *around* the Cypress planted by Zoroaster; so the Shahnameh informs us. Now, in Egypt, "the central sanctuary of every home had a holy tree;" and at the temple of Heliopolis, the place of this central tree was taken by the famous Persea tree. (Cf. W. Max Müller, *Egyptian Mythology*, p. 37).

(2) On each leaf of the Cypress of Kashmar was inscribed the name of King Gushtasp and an exhorta-

tion to him. Exactly corresponding to this the supreme god Amen registered the names of the kings of Egypt on "the holy tree Persea" in the temple at Heliopolis (Max Müller *op. cit.*, p. 37). Sometimes the Egyptians went farther and their gods placed the king himself in the celestial tree (*Ibid.*, p 53).

(3) The Devil was imprisoned by Zoroaster in the hall at Kashmar. It was very remarkable that the gigantic serpent Apepi or Apophis was represented in Egypt either as killed at the foot of the Persea tree or as imprisoned in chains in that place (Max Muller, *op., cit.*, pp. 105–106). This Apophis or Apepi was the great enemy of the sun-god.

(4) On the walls of the hall at Kashmar, King Gushtasp is said (in the Shahnameh) to have placed sculptured reliefs of older Persian Kings. No authority need be quoted to show that the Egyptian temples and sanctuaries contained statues and reliefs of kings.

That the Hall at Kashmar should be, according to the description we possess of it, a sort of replica of the temple at Heliopolis is in itself a historical curiosity. We must now advert to an important corollary which is sure to be drawn from this resemblance.

I am not one of those who hold that Zoroaster lived about the sixth century before the Christian Era. Nevertheless, I must admit that, the resemblance between the temples at Kashmar and at Heliopolis affords some corroboration to the theory of Floigl which identifies Hystaspes, the father of Darius with King Gushtasp (Cf. Jackson, *Zoroaster the Prophet of Ancient Iran*, p. 217). It is well-known that Darius

had reconquered Egypt and that he had lived there for some time. "He conversed with the priests and studied their theology and writings." (E. A. Wallis Budge, *Egypt*, p. 228). He not only repaired the temple of Ptah at Memphis; he himself built a large temple to Amen of which the ruins exist in our days. Having thus studied and practised Egyptian temple architecture, would it be strange, if on his return to Persia he built a temple to his own deity on the lines of the well known temples of Egypt? It is also evident that of all the cults of Egypt, the cult of the Sun would appeal most to Darius, owing to the veneration in which the Sun was held by the Persians. The temple of the Sun at Heliopolis would appeal to him most as it was the model on which other temples to the Sun were built in Egypt and also because it contained no image or cultus statue. (Erman, *Handbook of Egyptian Religion*, pp. 42–43 ). If so, what was more natural than that he should take the temple of the Sun at Heliopolis as a model for one of the temples which he might have built in Persia on his return from Egypt? Would it not be a very natural way of celebrating his Egyptian triumphs in Persia? I do not think that the above argument is a conclusive one; but it certainly gives some support to the hypothesis of Floigl and of Hertel.

Leaving aside the highly complicated subject of the date of Zoroaster, *we can conclude that the description of the hall at Kashmar in the Shahnameh is a reminiscence of the conquest of Egypt by Darius.* We have satisfactory evidence that the contact of Persians with Egypt, which followed on that conquest had an

influence even on the architecture of the palaces of Darius, the oldest of the palaces at Persepolis (Cf. Sarré, *Die Kunst des Alten Persien*, p. 12). To go a little further, the famous figure at Pasargadæ which some have supposed to be a representation of the Cyrus, and others to be that of some sacred genius, has an Egyptian head dress (Sarré, *op. cit.*, p. 6). Cavaignac has argued recently that soon after the conquest of Egypt the Persians modified their own calendar in the light of the Egyptian calendar. We are thus realising gradually the great influence exerted by Egypt on its Persian conquerors. In the light of this we need not wonder if Darius built a temple in Persia on the Egyptian plan and with Egyptian symbolism.

I am aware of the existence in Tibet of a tree or trees situated in the gold-roofed temple at Kumbum of which the leaves are supposed to be written over with certain Tibetan characters. Since the days when Huc and Gabet wrote on the subject in the middle of the last century, quite a number of travellers have referred to it. About twenty years ago the matter received full discussion in W. Filchner's important work "*Das Kloster Kumbum in Tibet.*" But the parallel which I have instituted between the temples at Heliopolis and Kashmar shows some features not to be found in these other accounts. These additional features and the strong probability of a historical connection between them distinguish the two cases compared by me from others.

### 9. THE LEGEND OF HAFT-WĀD.

While narrating the events of the reign of Ardashir, the first Sassanian monarch, Firdausi gives

us a curious story about his antagonist Haft-wād who ruled in Kirman. The poet accounts for the rise of Haft-wād to power by a wondrous tale. He was once a poor man whose small income was eked out by the industry of his daughters who had taken to spinning and weaving. One day, we are told, one of these girls while eating an apple found a worm in it. She took the worm as a mascot and placed it on the spinning wheel. The result was highly satisfactory, as she found she could spin much more on that day than ever before. In fact this worm brought good luck to the whole family of Haft-wād by causing all family enterprises to prosper until Haft-wād rose to be a king. Naturally, he started a cult of the worm and cherished and sacrificed to it. By its aid he brought his opponent Ardashir to the brink of disaster. Nor did the tide of fortune turn until Ardashir succeeded in entering Kirman and killing the worm by a stratagem. The story has puzzled the students of the Shahnameh. But here again the explanation is to be found in Chinese mythology. The Chinese have always believed in the virtues of the mascot called the "Golden Caterpillar." The belief is by no means extinct in our days, and De Groot tells us that he collected the notions prevailing on the subject in China not only from ancient works, but at the present day, "from the lips of women and matrons in Amoy and the surrounding districts":—"A Golden Caterpillar is a true Jack-of-all-trades. It can spin, weave and sew, plough, sow and reap, in a word, it turns its hand to work of whatever kind with a most wonderful display of dexterity. In the house where it is kept, women merely have to stretch a few warp

threads on a loom to find the whole web finished to perfection before the next morning dawns." (I need hardly emphasize the close analogy of this to the narrative of Haft-wād) De Groot goes on to say that "if its master is a farmer, he has to thrust his spade into the ground only once or twice, to find in no less than no time the whole field ploughed, sown and harrowed. Thus the man or woman, who has a caterpillar at command, soon becomes wealthy." (De Groot, *op. cit.*, Vol. V, pp. 857–858.) It was thus we find that Haft-vād grew rich; but he also cherished the worm, fed it on delicacies, started a cult for it and virtually offered sacrifices to it; and his enemy Ardashir too had to pretend to pray and sacrifice to the worm in order to compass the destruction of the latter. This part of the belief is well known to the Chinese of to-day and we read further in the work cited that "the owner must feed and regale the insect carefully." Indeed, in China human sacrifices are often offered to the Golden Caterpillar, for "superstition enforces also an implicit belief in the general tale that the insect from time to time demands a human victim to prey on, and is formally allowed by its keeper to attack one." In fact, the worship of the Golden Caterpillar is an acknowledged branch of sorcery in China, and its practice was probably attributed, at once to account for the sudden rise of Haft-wād and to assert the moral superiority of Ardashir over his rival. Before, however, the story could have been so utilised in Persia for political objects, it must have been introduced from China and must have become fairly well known in Persia.

The method by which the Caterpillar or worm is to be found is stated very similarly in the Chinese and Persian accounts. The daughter of Haft-wād finds it while she is cutting a fruit. Chinese accounts for such finds are equally strange. We are told of a China-man who found a round pebble. He ground and polished it, thus discovering that it consisted of two layers, one fitting upon the other. Grinding it off to the size of a fist, he split it up, and out came an insect resembliug a grub "which was indeed the Golden Caterpillar." (De Groot, *op. cit.*, p. 857.)

In an article published in the *Journal of the American Oriental Society* (March, 1935), Messrs H. Y. Feng and J. K. Shryock have thrown much light on the subject of the Chinese black magic known as "Ku" of which the Golden Caterpillar is a variety. That article is full of instruction for those who would make a comparative study of the legend of Haft-wād. In that legend the discovery of the worm and its utilisation for obtaining wealth are attributed to the women of Haft-wād's family. So also in the article referred to above we read of women who keep *Ku* getting plenty of money and of their carrying the *Ku* in pears (pp. 22–23). The worms are also found in fruit like melons and pears. We read further that "the family who serve the poisonous spirit become rich," but it must worship the *Ku* spirit only, forsaking all other deitie's (Ib. pp. 20–21). All these traits are found in the Shahnameh legends which adds that the "worm" was kept in a special receptacle—a black box. As to that it is interesting to note that the Chinese "pictograph (for the *Ku*) shows insects, worms or

snakes in a receptacle" (Ib. p. 9). The *Ku*, finally cannot be "killed with the sword or burned" (Ib. p. 18) and that accounts for the stratagem employed by Ardashir to destroy the worm.

This legend of Haft-wād is a good example from which we can illustrate the value of our study of the parallelism between legends. The older commentators on the Shahnameh were puzzled how to account for the curious story and made many wild guesses with the object of explaining it. Thus, the great Noldeke advanced the suggestion that the story of Haft-wād was a form of the old myth of Apollo and the Hydra or of Vritra. M. Mohl also believed it to be the adaptation of that myth with an allusion to the introduction of the silk-worm into Persia. Justi, in his *Namenbuch* (p. 125) adopts these suggestions. But, as Darmesteter well remarks, the main difficulty is to show why such myths should find a place in the history of Ardeshir (*Etudes Iraniennes*, p. 81). But that ingenious author himself goes still farther afield in assuming that the worm in our legend is an allusion to the dragon Azi Dahaka. The suggestion of Liebrecht on the subject has so far been the least misleading. He compares the legend of Haft-wād to the Scandinavian myth of Ragnar and Thora. In that story Count Herraudr has given his beautiful daughter Thora a serpent which he has found in a vulture's egg. Thora is pleased with the serpent and keeps it in a fine box. The serpent, however, keeps on growing until it fills the box and later still, in his terror at such an alarming development, the Count offers the hand of the beautiful Thora to anyone who succeeds in killing the serpent. Ragnar kills the

animal and receives the reward. Darmesteter is dissatisfied with this explanation of the legend of Haft-wād, and so are we. The Scandinavian legend has only one feature in common with the Persian story—*viz.*, the remarkable growth in the size of the insect. The two stories have no other feature in common, nor can it be explained why such a story should be incorporated in the history of Ardashir. On the other hand, the Chinese legend which is brought forward here is similar in every respect to the Persian story and *we have accounted for its introduction; the motive was to accuse Haft-wād of sorcery as well as to account for his sudden rise to power.*

But it might well be asked how came the legend which was and is current on the Chinese Coast to become so well-known in the south of Persia—in Persis which was the home of Ardashir and in Kerman which was the capital of Haft-wād? In answer to this question we might refer to the age-long maritime intercourse between the coasts of China and those of the Persian Gulf. In a magnificent article in the Journal Asiatique (April–June, 1924) M. Gabriel Ferrand proves that for many centuries the ports of the Persian Gulf sent out ships which navigated the Indian Ocean and the China Sea. That article tries to trace the history of Siraf and other ports of the Gulf for centuries. It is true that three centuries after the Arab conquest these ports entered on their decline. But by then they had flourished for many centuries. It is due to such maritime activity of Persia that the Chinese believed many articles coming to them from Indo-China, Ceylon, India, Arabia and even Africa to be the products of Persia

(Ferrand, *op. cit.*, p. 241). Such a close maritime intercourse might lead to the propagation of some Chinese legends into Persia. And in this connection, it is interesting to find in Firdausi that Haft-wād who ruled later in Kerman, came originally from a port called Kajaran on the Persian Gulf,*

ز شهر کجاران بدریای پارس •

So also we read in the hitsorian Istakhri that the maritime province of Ardashir-Khurreh (which was much patronised by King Ardashir) contained port which were prominent in trade and navigation (Ferrand, *op. cit.*, p. 252). The riddle of a Chinese legend figuring in the history of the war of Ardashir and Haft-wād is thus solved—a riddle which had been propounded by Darmesteter.

10. THE SEARCH FOR THE "FUNGUS OF IMMORTALITY."

The account given in the Shahnameh of the mission of Barzoe the physician for the bush or fungus of immortality is also very similar to those of the attempt made by the Emperor Wu Ti of the Han Dynasty (who died in the year 87 B.C.) to obtain the Fruit of Life. Even before the age of Wu Ti, other Chinese emperors had sent similar missions to discover the "fungus of immortality." These analogies between the accounts of the Persian and of the various Chinese missions deserve to be traced in some detail. Just as the Persian King Noshirwan sent Barzoe on the quest of the fungus, so one of the emperors of China despatched a sage on the same mission. Hsu Fu, for such was the name of the agent, succeeded so far that he saw newly harvested crops of the "fungus of

* (Haft-wād came from) "the city of Kajaran on the Persian Gulf."

immortality." Like Barzoe, the Chinese agent, too, was well-provided with money, but he found that a very exorbitant price had been set upon the fungus of immortality. "The god then informed the emperor's messenger that the offerings he brought were not sufficient to be regarded as payment for this magic plant" (Donald A. Mackenzie, *Myths of China and Japan*, pp. 114–116). The result was that "not a leaf could be obtained to bring back to China." Indeed, both Barzoe and Hsu Fu were lucky in being able to return from the quest to their respective native lands, for a sage of the court of Chinese emperor Wu ti who started on a similar mission "never returned to the earth." (D. A. Mackenzie, *op. cit.*, pp. 146–148). It is interesting to find that both the Shahnameh and the "Herodotus of China" have identical ideas about the way in which the fungus of immortality was to be utilised if and when it was secured. We should have supposed *prima facie* that the fungus was to be eaten or its juice was to be injected in order to renew youth. That was not, however, the correct procedure. "The Herodotus of China" has recorded that once upon a time leaves of the fungus were carried by the ravens to the main land from one of the islands, and dropped on the faces of warriors slain in battle. The warriors immediately came to life, although they had lain dead for three days." (De Groot, Vol. IV, p. 307, and D. A. Mackenzie, p. 113). In the Shahnameh Barzoe follows exactly the same procedure :*

* "He selected vegetables of all kinds green and dry, juicy and withered. He then laid and rubbed these vegetables on the dead men, but not one of the dead awoke to life. Had then the marvellous vegetation failed to accomplish its object?"

گیاها ز خشک و ز تر بر گزید
ز پژمرده و هر چه رخشنده دید
ز هر گونهٔ سود ازان خشک و تر
همی بر پراگند بر مرده بر
یکی مرده زنده نگشت از گیا
همانا که سست آمد آن کیمیا

Here we may take leave, for the time being, of these very interesting and striking parallelism between Chinese and Saka legends. For a more detailed and reliable study of this important topic we must await the leisure of such a master of the Sino-Iranian lore as Laufer or de Saussure, whose studies of the mutual influence of Iranian and Chinese civilisation have opened out new fields for archæologists. Indeed, the present essay might well form a chapter of one of Laufer's works. It is for such scholars to determine finally the age when the Saka and Chinese legend cycles influenced each other. If, however, a conjecture might be permitted to a mere amateur, I would suggest that the chief period during which such influence was exercised was during the Chou dynasty which ruled China from 1249 B.C. to 1122 B.C. and which very likely was partly or wholly of Scythic origin (Cf. D. A. Mackenzie, *op. cit.*, p. 290). The rule of such a dynasty would form a favourable epoch for the dominance of Saka influence in China; and it is significant that several of our legends like those of Li-Ching, No-Cha, Ta-Chi, etc., are to be definitely placed about the time of the Chou dynasty. We have it on very good authority that Wu-Wang, the founder

of the Chou dynasty assembled the tribes on the frontier of the West of China in order to gain the throne. As Prof. Hirth argues, this implies that "his ascendency was actually brought about by a foreign army" (Hirth, *Ancient History of China*, p. 70). Non-Chinese tribes thus played a great part in the establishment of Chou dynasty (Hirth, *op., cit.*, pp. 65–70) and the influence of such tribes might have been important in the field of the history and legends of the empire.

As a literary and historical curiosity I bring together here the lines referring to China which for some reason Firdausi has introduced into many of the Shahnameh legends which we have shown to possess Chinese analogues. Thus we read in the legend of Rustam and Sohrab[1]—

بدو گفت کز چین یکی نیکخواه
بنوی بیامد بنزدیک شاه

In the legend of Akwan we note[2]—

چنین داد پاسخ که دانای
داستانی ز دست اندرین

So also in the legend of Ispendiar[3]—

وان تو بر کردگار افرین
ور ایدر برو سوی دریای چین

1 (Said Hajir) "From China an ally has recently arrived to help the king."

2 "He answered that a Chinese sage has written an episode on this topic."

3 (The Simurgh advised Rustam to) "pray to God and to proceed to the shores of the Sea of China" (to cut the arrow from the Kaz tree).

And in the story of Haft-wād[1]—

ز دریای چین تا بکرمان رسید
همه روی دریا سیه گسترید

It is also to be remarked that these references to China were in no way made necessary by the plot or context of the respective legends. All this might well give rise to a well-grounded conjecture that in the earlier versions of the stories which the poet had before him there were such further and more detailed references to China that the poet felt bound to follow suit and to introduce the above lines.

1 "Haft-wād's power stretched from the Sea of China to Karman and his troops occupied the shores of these seas."

# 2

# BAHRAM YASHT: ANALOGUES AND ORIGINS.*

The Parsis are particularly fond of reciting the Bahram Yasht; and the more one studies that Yasht the stronger becomes the conviction that this preference is well grounded and is guided by a sound instinct; for that Yasht contains an unusually large number of mystical, poetic, and beautiful legends and much symbolism of the same description. These legends and that symbolism are very ancient, since very luckily, indeed, the ethicising process has not gone very far in the case of this Yasht. For that and other reasons, the Yasht forms a rich store-house of old legends and usages and lends itself particularly well to the purposes of a comparative study of religious legends. In particular, as I am attempting to show here, the legends and symbolism of China approaches very close to those of the Yasht. Indeed, it would not be difficult to write an instructive and useful commentary on the Yasht with the help of the material available in Chinese works or in works on the Chinese religions. The parallelism will be closest where we touch on the bird and tree symbolism in the Yasht; but other portions of the Yasht will also be the better interpreted and understood after such a comparative study. We

* Issued in the Journal and proceedings, Asiatic Society of Bengal 15th August, 1929.

shall begin our task by examining the very interesting bird and tree symbolism from the Bahram Yasht—supplementing it suitably from other Yashts and from the Pehlevi texts. Other portions of the Yasht will be taken up later; and we shall wind up by considering whether any light is thrown by our study on the important question of the geographical region in which the leading ideas and symbolism of the Yasht originated. Be it noted, however, that the question treated is not one of language but of the basic cultural and religious ideas and of the geographical position and surroundings of the region in which a hymnology of the character of that Yasht could have its origins.

### 1. THE CULT OF THE CRANE ("Sien-Ho").

The first bird of the Chinese Mythology to which we shall turn is the Sien-Ho or Crane. Père Doré has given a useful resumé of the old Chinese beliefs regarding the Crane in his encyclopædic work of *Recherches sur les Superstitons En Chine* (Part I, Vol. 2, pp. 468–469). It is only a short sketah of the legends about the bird, but it casts a great deal of useful light on the Yasht. Let us begin with one of the most perplexing paragraphs in the Yasht and interpret it in the light of the cult of the Crane. In verse 39 of the Yasht we read that the bird called Varengana "carries the chariot of the lords; he carries the chariots of the lordly ones; the chariots of the sovereigns. He carried the chariot of Kavi 'Usa.'" The paragraph is at first sight unmeaning, for how can a mere bird carry the cars of sovereigns? Let us, however, turn to the following story of the Sien-Ho in a Chinese work, and

that verse of the Yasht will have found its interpretation: "The barbarians invaded the territory of the Marquis of Wei I-Kong in 660 B.C. The Marquis gave them battle in the marsh of Yug. He loved to honour the cranes and took with him some of these birds perched on his war chariot. The soldiers who were not well disposed towards him while putting on their armour, before battle, said jestingly, 'Forward our crane officers! Without you how can we engage in battle?'" Such sceptical and irreverent soldiers were signally defeated, as indeed they deserved to. But the moral and implication of the story is that but for such blasphemy the cranes would have carried the leader's chariot victoriously through the battle. In the light of such beliefs the true meaning of the Yasht verse 39 is clear. We now know the old legend that the mysterious crane could carry the chariots of sovereigns through battles, and it is on that ground partly that I shall argue later that "Varengana is to be taken as the equivalent of Persian word 'Kulang' (crane)."

Verse 39 goes on to say that upon the wings of that bird is carried the "male horse, the burden bearing camel, the boat in the river." Read by itself all this is meaningless. However, in Chinese mythology the crane (Sien-Ho) is represented as the most rapid means of transporation by sea or land. Thus the hero Sentaro was carried by a crane to the islands of the blest and back in one night (Donald A. Mackenzie: *Myths of China and Japan*, pp. 116–117); and in the pictures of the eight famous immortals of China

crossing the Sea we find the crane flying with their boat (Werner: *Myths and legends of China*, p. 302). In another great battle the hero Niu-wo figures triumphantly riding on a crane (Doré; Part 2, Vol. II. p. 1049). So also the famous "white Crane Youth" rides the sacred crane in his great battles. No doubt the origin of this idea about the crane as a sort of genius of locomotion was to be found in the immense extent of the annual migration of the crane which covers countries stretching from India in the south up to the Arctic regions.

The Varengana is also represented in Bahram Yasht verse 36 as a bringer of good luck—one who bears a feather of that bird is "a fortunate man." Further, "it maintains him in his glory." This accords very well with the Chinese legends which make the crane the companion of the gods of honour as well as of good fortune (Doré: *op. cit.*, Part I. Vol. 2. fig. 217). In some images the angel of good fortune is seen walking with the crane by his side; while in others a banner is borne over him and a picture of the crane is drawn on the banner (*Ibid.*, Part II, Vol. II, pp. 946-947).

But if the crane or Sien-Ho corresponds to the bird Varengana in s. 14 of the Yasht, it corresponds also to the bird Saena (Mereg-sin) in section 15. And here I would emphasise the *close similarity of the names* of the bird Saen or Sin of Persian and of the "Sien-Ho" of Chinese legends. In China the crane got its name Sien-Ho from its supposed close association with the "Sien" or hermits who have secured total immunity

from death by consuming life-conferring vegetable products. "The crane is celebrated throughout China for living hundreds, nay, thousands of years. Authors describe it as a bird accompanying especially the Sien who obtained bodily immortality and serving them for vehicles (De Groot: Vol. IV, p. 232–233 and 295). Indeed, the association between these majestic birds and the holy saints was so close that sometimes the saint was transformed into the bird and at other times the bird was changed into the saint. These and such other notions account for the legends of the wisdom of the Simurgh to be met with in the Shahnameh, the Dabistan and in the mystic poems of Attar and other Sufis. Very probably they also account for one of the most famous saints and apostles of Zoroastrianism being given (or assuming) the name of "Saeno."

We note that in Bahram Yasht verse 41, the bird Mereg-Sin is said to cover the mountain tops "as clouds cover them." Here also we have a reference to the crossing of mountains by large flocks of cranes in their annual migrations. The range of Paropamisos was called locally "Aparasen" in Awesta age since it was so high that the cranes could not cross them (Cf. Marquart, *Untersuchungen*, p. 75). That phenomenon—the crossing of mountains by cranes–also appealed to the imagination of the Chinese and was embodied in their poetic legends. Thus one of the lofty mountains of China was called "the Mountain of the song of the cranes" (Doré; Part II, Vol. 10, p. 789). We have also the account of a battle fought in the heroic age for the possession of a mountain where the crane by his great powers of flight

nearly succeeded in achieving success (Doré; Part II, Vol. 9, p. 653). If the Bahram Yasht rises to poetic heights in describing the flight of the Saena over the mountains, the romantic genius of China could not be said to have lagged very far behind.

In the later Persian legends as narrated in the Shahnameh and the Dabistan, the mystical birds Varengana and Mereg-sin are identified and treated as one. While in the Bahram Yasht verse 35 it is the feathers of the Varengana with which the body is to be rubbed to cure the wounds inflicted by an enemy, in the Shahnameh that virtue is attributed to the feathers of the Simurgh. "When Rudabah's flank was opened to bring forth Rustam, her wound was healed by rubbing it with the Simurgh's feather; Rustam, wounded to death by Isfendiyar, was cured in the same manner."

We shall later consider the interesting legends about various trees like the pine, the fir and the cypress which were believed by the Chinese to be life-conferring and health-restoring plants ( Cf. De Groot; *Religious System of China*, Vol. IV, pp. 294–324). Now, since the cranes were observed to visit old firs there was formed a very ancient association between the cranes and the trees and these birds were supposed to be the souls of these old trees (*Ibid.*, p. 289). Being identified with the spirit of such long-lived trees, the crane (the Sien-Ho) became in its turn the bird of immortality (Doré Part I, Vol. 2, pp. 468-9 and fig. 217). Hence, even down to our own days the crane is to the Chinese a transcendent symbol of immortality. As such an emblem it is

painted even on the hearses of the dead to symbolise the transition to immortality. Indeed, it personifies generally the genius of immortality in China (Doré; *Ibid.*, and De Groot; Vol. IV, p. 359).

It is when we find such an ancient and great cult of the Sien-Ho or crane as the symbol of immortality that we can understand how the western Iranians living not very far from China came to believe that its feathers would cure wounds, confer vitality and repel charms (*Bahram Yasht*, s. 35).

It might be noted that the cult of the Crane which was at one time so important in old Iran and China cannot be said to be dead even in our own days. "In certain districts of India, in Japan and among the Kalmuks they are held in reverence." (Cf. Evans, "*Birds*", p. 254—*Cambridge Natural History*). Their wonderful dances and their mighty and seasonal flights have been noticed not only in the religious poetry of China and Persia but by poets like Virgil in the West and like Attar and Rumi in the East. Their long and mysterious flights have been taken by the Sufi poets as worthy types of the soul's flights towards and in the world of spirit; and this mystic poetry has found in the flight of the cranes following their leader a suitable parallel for the seekers after truth following their spiritual guide.

In the Awesta the Varengana is said to carry heroes and their chariots (*Bahram Yasht*, verses 39 and 40). So also in the Shahnameh it carries Rustam in one night to the "Kaz" tree on the Chinese sea. Such beliefs too are not yet dead in parts of Asia. Thus "in-

1740 the Tartars of Krasnojarsk and the Assamians assured J. G. Gmelin that when autumn came each Crane took a Corncrake on its back and transported it to a warmer land; while the well known belief of the Egyptian peasant that Cranes and Storks bring a living load was not long since gravely promulgated in this country as a truth" (Newton and Gadow; *Dictionary of Birds*, p. 550. Gmelin; *Reise durch Sibirien*, Vol. III, pp. 393–394). It is an old belief that the lesser birds get themselves conveyed by Storks and Cranes on their migrations.

## 2. THE CULT OF THE PHŒNIX.

Somewhat less important for the study of Bahram Yasht, but still quite useful in the task of interpretation is the Chinese cult of the Phœnix. Thus in the Yasht verse 21 we read about a mystic bird that he *grazes* the hidden way of the mountains, he *grazes* the tops of the mountains, he *grazes* the depths of the vales, he *grazes* the summits of the trees, listening to the voices of the birds." All this is very poetical, but its full meaning and poetic significance is brought out only by a comparison with the cult of the Phœnix. In Chinese mythology the Phœnix bathes in limpid fountain, *passes* over the Kuen Lun mountains and in the evening it retires in the rocky grottoes of Tan. It is *only rarely that it touches the ground* and when it does the other birds at once come to pay it homage (Doré; Part I. Vol. 2, p. 444). We can now see why in the verse quoted from the Yasht, the mystic bird only grazes or passes over *the mountains and depths of vales*. For according to Chinese classics the Phœnix is too-

dignified a bird to touch the ground except momentarily and then only to accept the homage of other birds. So also in Awesta the bird "*grazes the summits of trees*" for there is only one tree, according to the Chinese mythology on which the Phœnix condescends to alight (Doré *op. cit.*, Part I, Vol. 2, p. 444). The bird does not walk or tread the ground, it either flies or dances as it has only one foot (Groot, II, 575). Interpretation thus assisted brings out the full poetic effect of the Awesta text.

Then again in the Yasht verse 36 "the feathers of that bird brings him the homage of men." This passage is indeed the predecessor of the famous cult of the Homai which was widely spread in mediœval and modern Persia. According to that cult, the shadow of of the bird sufficed to exalt the man on whom it fell to kingship. A very similar belief was held in ancient times in China, and instances are quoted in which the Phœnix built its nest on the roofs of the palaces of various emperors of China, (Doré; Part I, Vol. 2, p. 442).

So high is the spiritual value of the feathers of the Phœnix that one of them was habitually carried about by such a prince of spiritualism as Chang Kuo—one of the eight famous immortals (Werner, p. 295). Well might our Yasht say that such a feather brings to its bearer the homage of men—homage which is, as we see, not only terrestrial but spiritual. It is to be noticed that there were only a dozen of such feathers in the tail of the Phœnix—a number corresponding to the months of the year. When we obtain the further

information from the Chinese writers that this divine bird is the product of the fire and the "sien" (*Ibid.*, p. 444) we see the rationale of the place it occupies in the Bahram Yasht.

There is another verse of our Yasht (verse 19) which the Phœnix legend might help to elucidate. That verse describes the bird as "formidable in its lower parts and aggressively armed in its upper regions." This is paralleled again in the Chinese account of the Phœnix which endows it with the back of the tortoise, the neck of the serpent and the head of a fowl (Doré; part I, Vol. 2, p. 444). Thus the Phœnix is endowed in its upper and lower parts with formidable means of attack and defence both according to the Chinese and the Persian legends.

### 3. THE CULT OF THE RAVEN.

The descriptiou of the Varaghna bird (the raven) which we have in verse 19 of the Bahram Yasht corresponds both to the Chinese cults of the Raven and of the bird of the Morning. In China "the Sun is symbolised by the figure of a raven in a circle" (Werner, *op. cit.*, p. 176, Granet, *Danse et Legends de la Chine Ancienne* pp. 372, 375 and 377). The red raven ("le Corbeau Rouge") was the symbol of the Chou race and dynasty. "The Chou ruled by the the efficacy of fire," for when their ancestor was marching to gain a throne a flame came down from on high to consume the sacrifice offered by him and the flame then changed itself into a red crow (Granet, p. 387). Consequently the red crow was, like the Phœnix, the symbol both of the Sun and of the sacred

fire. Thus the raven was an age-long symbol of the fire and the Sun in Asia, and hence we can understand its place in the Yasht. There was another reason too for the raven's presence in legends; for it was believed to be a "spectre bird" in China, and De Groot quotes from the "commentator of the Classic of Birds" to the effect that its knowledge is great enough to give it an insight into good and bad fortune." Hence from ancient times the Chinese look upon even the crows as "spectres able to foreknow things." (De Groot, Vol. V., p. 638.)

But the Varaghna is not only reminiscent of the raven of the Chinese myths but also of "the bird of dawn." The Varaghna according to our Yasht "flies up joyfully at the first break of dawn, wishing the night to be no more." According to the Chinese accounts too, the bird of dawn has a sonorous voice and majestic bearing. In verse 20 of the Bahram Yasht the Varaghna flies about joyously in early morning wishing the disappearance of the night and the appearance of the morning. In this respect also the analogy of the Varaghna to the Chinese bird of the morning is very clear.

Before we pass on to another suhject, it might be permitted to revert to verse 36 of the Yasht. It is there said that "if a man holds a bone of that strong bird.....no one can smite or turn to flight that fortunate man." We are not told in the Awesta, however, how the bone is to be used to secure such immunity. But here Chinese mythology comes to our assistance and helps again in the task of interpretation. For we

read in Chinese accounts that the emperor Houang-ti encountering a sea-monster subdued him by hitting him with a bone of the "thunder-bird" with such force that the noise of the blows was heard 500 li's away and served to inspire the whole empire with a respectul fear of the hero (Granet, 509-510). Incidentally, an attempt has been made py A. Gruenwedel to identify the "thunder-bird" with the Indian bird "Garuda" (Werner, 200).

## II. THE PLANT SYMBOLISM OF THE YASHT.

We now pass from legends about the marvellous ird Saena to those about the tree on which it rests; and here we shall be supplementing the information given by the Bahram Yasht by that afforded by the Rashnu Yasht (verse 17) and by the Minokhirad, LXII, 37. In these accounts we are informed that the resting place of the Saena is a tree "that stands in the middle of the Vouru-Kasha, that is called *the tree of good remedies, the tree of powerful remedies, the tree of all remedies.*" To this description of the tree the Mino-Khirad adds that the bird rests on the tree which is Jad-besh (opposed to harm) of all seeds."

For the tree rendered so famous alike in the Awesta and in the Pehlevi texts it is not difficult to find close parallels from Chinese mythology. Thus we are told that "the bird of dawn" which "having eaten the active principle of the Sun, has assumed the form of a three-footed bird, which perches on the fu-sang tree (a tree said to grow at the place where the sun rises) *in the middle of the Eastern Sea*" (Werner, *op. cit.*, pp. 186-187). Here we have a complete parallel to the

Awesta account of the tree standing in the middle of the Vouru Kasha on which is the resting place of a marvellous bird.

However, we have still to find an analogue for the "tree of powerful remedies, the tree of all remedies" of the Rashnu Yasht. Nor shall we be disappointed, for there is a great cycle of stories about the "Sien" trees growing on the shores and in the islands of the Chinese Sea where the holy men (the "Sien") derive the medicine which confers immortality on them (De Groot, Vol. IV, pp. 294-308, Donald A. Mackenzie, *Myths of China and Japan*, pp. 113-119) On some of these trees is found the crane (the "Sien-ho"). Indeed, these cranes are to be regarded as the souls of these trees; and further, the souls of old firs are represented sometimes as cranes which may be transformed men (De Groot, IV, 289). Moreover, there is the closest association between the life-lengthening trees, the cranes and the holy men. The holy men are "Sien," the trees are also "sien" trees and the crane is the "Sien-ho."

These trees of the Eastern Ocean *which can give immortality* correspond very well with the white Haoma or Gokard—"the healing and the undefiled, growing at the source of the water of Ardevisura; *every one who eats it becomes immortal*" (Bundahish, Chap. XXVII, verse 4). From that tree, the Bundahish adds further, immortality is prepared (Bundahish, Chap. XVII, verse 1), just as the Chinese "siens" prepared the means of attaining immortality from the trees on the Eastern Ocean or grown in the islands thereof.

That brings us to verse 59 of the Bahram Yasht which is the one place in the Yasht celebrating the

virtues of Haoma. The first thing that strikes us is that the virtues of the Haoma as celebrated in the Bahram Yasht are different from those narrated in the Haoma Yasht. In the former it is supposed to "save one's head" and to be "a protector to my body." In fact as Lommel has pointed out the sprig of Homa is to be used only as an amulet in the Bahram Yasht (*Lommel, Die Yashts des Awesta*, p. 134) and is to be carried on the head to protect life in battle. In other words, it prolongs the life of its worshipper. On the other hand, in the Haoma Yasht the functions of Haoma are to exalt intelligence and powers of thought to grant wisdom and wealth and to promote matrimony and the birth of worthy progeny. To the Haoma juice of the Bahram Yasht corresponds that dew of immortality from the lunar trees which was given by the goddess to illustrious heroes like Shen-I to prolong their lives (D. A. Mackenzie, *op cit.*, p. 144). As the author just quoted observes "the moon-water which nourishes plants and trees and the dew of immortality in the jade cup, appear to be identical with the Indian Soma and the Nectar of the classic gods"—and, it might have been added, to the life prolonging Haoma of the Bahram Yasht.

## III. PARALLELS TO SOME OTHER SECTIONS OF THE BAHRAM YASHT.

*The parallelism is the greatest as between the Chinese and Persian legends as regards the tree and bird symbolism.* But there are interesting resemblances as regards other legends also. Let us take section 17 of the Bahram Yasht of which the importance has been

hitherto overlooked. It is to be emphasised that this section contains rules governing the sacrificial rites in the cases of the angel Bahram. Verse 55 commands that only the dry variety of woods are to feed the fire of Bahram. Verse 51 informs us of the classes of persons who cannot participate in the sacrifices to the angel. But the most important rule is no doubt that laid down by verse 50 which states the description of cattle which can be offered up to that angel. We are told in that verse that the cattle sacrificed should be of white colour or of black or yellow colour (Cf. Harlez and Darmesteter), but that the cattle should be of one colour only or of the same sort. This rules remind us of the similar sacrificial regulations observed by the ancient Chinese. Thus in the case of sacrifices to the spirit of waters a pure white horse was preferred or a bay one with a black mane (Garnet, 476-7).

(1) The Yasht emphasises in verses 7 and 9 the *yellow ears and horns* of the bull and the *yellow ears and caparison* of the horse—both the bull and the horse being "incarnations" of Bahram. That description points to the old Chinese colour symbolism. "In the Buddhist paradise the pure beings have faces bright and *yellowish*, yellow being the sacred colour of the Buddhist, as it is the colour of the chief dragon of China" (D. A. Mackenzie, p. 126). The emperor Hwang Ti (yellow God) was one of the most famous of the legendary emperors (Mackenzie, p. 277). "Yellow is like red reputed to be a vital colour. Lightning is yellow; the flames of wood are yellow—while the embers are red" (D. A. Mackenzie, p. 162).

Why, again, it might be asked does the Bahram Yasht emphasise the colour of the *ears* of the two animals (the horse and the bull) in verses 7 and 9? We would look in vain for the explanation elsewhere in the Awesta. But the Chinese mythology can help us by proving that the ears were a particularly important part of the animals offered for sacrifice, and the bull and the horse were pre-eminently sacrificial animals (Granet, *op. cit.*, pp. 136–143). As Granet observes "the animal sacrificed was not killed at once. A beginning was made by offering to the gods a little of the blood and hair and *this hair was taken from the ears*" (*Ibid.*, pp. 137–138). The same authority goes on to say that the blood drawn from the ears was necessary to sanctify both the field of battle and the place of triumph (*Ibid.*, pp. 142-3). We thus account for the importance attached to the ears, as well as to the hair on the ears, and their colour in sacrifices offered to Mars in the Chinese systems. Nor according to our Yasht is the importance of these factors any the less in the cult of the Persian Mars.

The yellow or golden colour is however sometimes sacred by itself, and in another branch of Chinese mythology, the king of cattle (corresponding to Drawasp in the Awesta) is opposed by great general riding a horse with golden eyes (Doré, Part II, Vol. 11, p. 1048). Golden eyes as well as golden ears thus mark out a horse as sacred.

(2) In verse 29 of the Yasht we find the mention of the powerful Kara fish which is to be found in the Rangha and which has a wonderful eye-sight. A fuller

description of the fish is to be found in Bundahish, Chap. XVIII, verses 5 and 6 (*S. B. E.*, Vol. V. p. 66), where we have described for us further characteristics of the fish. It is a great fish which can snap in its jaws any animal; it is also said to be very "serpent-like." Very comparable with this is the "Divine Crocodile" or "first crocodile" of the Chinese which resides in the gulf or rather abyss of Tsouei-tchang. This fish has extraordinary power of illumination for when it either enters the abyss or emerges therefrom it produces flashes of light (Granet, p. 509.) With such powers of illumination and with its human head and eyes, the Chinese alligator too is very keen sighted. The serpentine shape and the powerful jaws of the fish as described in Bundahish certainly suggest a fish of the crocodile type.

In the Bundahish (Ch. XVIII, verse 2) we are also told that the great opponent of the beneficent Kara fish is a lizard formed by the evil spirit, and the task of the ten Kara fishes is to keep away that lizard (*S. B. E.*, Vol. V, p. 65). It is noteworthy, in this connection, that according to a great number of Chinese religious classics the lizard is the spirit of marshes. The spirit of the marshes is called Mien and it possesses the form of a great lizard. The same spirit is to be found in dried up beds of rivers. It is said to be as high as the spoke of a car's wheel and to be as long as the pole of the car (Cf. *De Harlez, Le Livre des Esprits et des Immortels*, pp. 80-81). As in the Awesta and in the Bundahish the Kara fish is the representative inhabitant of fresh flowing waters; while the saurian which infests

unhealthy marshes and drying up rivers might well be said to have been formed by the evil spirit.

(3) No Awesta scholar has yet explained the object or significance of the sentence in verse 44 of the Yasht: "Do thou throw four feathers in the way" of an advancing enemy about to engage in action. Several translators (e.g., Darmesteter, *S.B.E.*, Vol. XXIII, p. 243, note 2) have seen that the reference must be to "an arrow feathered with four Varengana's feathers." And this conjecture is supported by lines in the Shahnameh like نهاده بر او چار پر عقب

[*On that arrow were four feathers of the Eagle.*]

It was certainly an arrow with four feathers on it to be thrown at the foe before battle is joined. The reference to Varengana is a pure conjecture on the part of Darmesteter, for that bird has not been mentioned in a number of preceding verses in the Yasht and the bird mentioned anywhere near verse 44 is not the Varengana (which appears in verse 35) but the Saena which figures in verse 41. Nor does the Yasht say anything about fitting the feathers of either of these birds into the arrows. For the feathers of the Varengana are used only for rubbing the body with for curing wounds or to "bring homage of men." A good commentary on the Varengana's functions is to be found in Dēnkart, Bk. IX, Chap. 23, verse 3, where the Kayan glory stands by the king's said "to rub his bosom" (*S.B.E.*, Vol. XXXVII, p. 227). The feathers of the Varengana have a similar anointing function in the case of kings and princes as well as a healing function. There is no warrant for assuming with Darmesteter

that the Varengana's feathers which were so precious were to be used to assist the flight of arrows.

What then is the sense of emphasising the throwing of a single arrow at a foe at the beginning of a fight in which thousands of arrows will be soon discharged on both sides? Here again we can obtain useful light from ancient Chinese usages and legends. Arrows were thrown both for sacrificial and ceremonial purposes. When a male child was born four arrows were thrown—one at each cardinal point. Not only were these arrows thrown but others were *offered* to the gods residing in particular directions, like the East (Granet, p. 380, note 5; p. 448, note 3 and p. 233, note 2). The arrows thrown in certain directions were "arrows of expulsion" (i. e., thrown to get rid of evil influences), those which were offered were "arrows of oblation." The throwing of an arrow was also a necessary ceremonial for breaking up of an old friendship or alliance and was a necessary part of the ceremony of declaring hostilities. It is in the light of these ancient usages which might have extended far beyond the boundaries of China that verse 44 of our Yasht has to be read and interpreted. That Yasht tells us that victory would incline to the side of the party which was faithful to its plighted word and oath and has thus pleased Rashnu and Mithra (verse 47). It is certainly consistent with such strict notions of rectitude, formally to throw an arrow and thus break off all lien and alliance with the opponent before engaging him in battle. Or it may be that the arrows which were thrown in the way of the enemy were "as

arrows of expulsion" of evil influences. It is well worth adding here that according to the *Dēnkart*, in Sessanide times a stick which had been blessed was fired as the first arrow, at the beginning of battles, (Cf. Huart, *Ancient Persia and Iranian Civilization*, p. 151).

(4) It is true that the series of "incarnations" of Bahram to be found in this Yasht has no complete parallel in Chinese mythology. But some of the animals mentioned in the Yasht do form part of the cortege of Tcheng Hoang—the protector of cities against attacks and a god who was annually worshipped by every city in China with the object of securing victory and peace (Doré, *op. cit.*, part II, Vol. II, pp. 875–892). In fact Tcheng Hoang is a kind of Urban Mars and is considered to be the guardian of the fortifications, ramparts, and trenches of all towns in China. His annual fête and procession are of a military character with soldiers marching with banners and drums. But the most characterstic parts of the procession consists of two "satellites" of the urban Mars—the first with a bull's head and the other wearing a horse's head. The reader will remember that the bull and the horse form the first of the "incarnations" of Bahram in his Yasht.

As regards Tcheng Hoang he receives high honours in China and has been entitled "the king who protects the state" as well as "the king who defends, protects and pacifies the state." His sacrifice is obligatory on all—on kings, princes, magistrates, principalities and indeed on the whole realm. And yet it is significant that he was not known to the oldest legendary system

of China. However, his functions have been extended with the progress of time so that Tcheng Hoang has become also a scrutiniser of consciences who reports the good deeds of men to the Lord of Heaven as well as their crimes to the judge of the nether regions; (Cf. de Harlez, *Le Livre des Esprits et des Immortels* in the *Transactions Memoirs of the Academie Royale de Belgique*, Vol. 51, pp. 65–70). This reminds us that in verse 47 of the Bahram Yasht that angel is seen to be collaborating with Mithra and Rashnu (the Rhadamanthus of old Iran) in judging the conduct of people.

## IV. PROBLEM OF THE ORIGINS OF THE BAHRAM YASHT.

I have argued in another article that in the exchange of heroic legends between old Persia and China the intervening race of Sakas bore an important part, and indeed, that very likely both countries might have adopted some of the Saka legends. That the Sakas played a similar part in the matter of religious legends seems also probable. In particular, it is interesting to note the close connection of many general ideas and even details of Bahram Yasht with the history and sociology of this virile pastoral race. In fact, the atmosphere of the Yasht which we are studying appears to be and will be shown to be peculiarly adapted to the religious and social requirements of such a race. This appears to be the best explanation of the wonderful parallelism of the bird and tree symbolisms of Persia and China.

(1) The connection is closest in the case of the bird symbolism. Indeed, we should have been unable

to interpret passages about Mereg Sin and about the bird mentioned in verse 35 of the Yasht unless we had read the accounts of Zal and Rustam, those great representatives of the Saka race, in the Shahnameh; the explanation of verse 35 of the Yasht "with that feather thou shalt rub thy own body" is to be found in the Sakaean history: "when Rudabah's flank was opened to bring forth Rustam, her wound was healed by rubbing it with a Simurgh's feather; Rustam, wounded to death by Isfendyar, was cured in the same manner." This is the best comment and indeed the only comment made to explain section 14 of the Yasht (*S. B. E.*, Vol. XXIII, p. 240, note 2). The Mereg Saena presided over the fortunes of Zal and Rustam from their rise down to their fall. That bird was indeed the guardian angel—perhaps the totem of the Saka race. The negative argument is also strong; for the mystic bird never appears and is never heard of in the history of any purely Persian dynasty or heroic family. Indeed, by itself this might prove that the Bahram Yasht was composed at a time when and at a place where Saka notions and legends were dominant.

(2) Not only the history but the geography of the Sakas is reminiscent of the Bahram Yasht and of the great bird Saena mentioned in it. We read in the selections Zad-Sparam VII, 7 and also in Bundahishn XII, 9 of the Aparsen mountain in Sagastan (*S. B. E.*, V, p. 175). In a learned disquisition on this topic Marquart shows that "Aparsen" means the mountain which the Saena bird itself cannot traverse. He bases his conclusion on the dictum of Hiouen-Thsang that "the falcons themselves cannot fly over the range", and to

this the mountain owes its name; he then adds that by "falcon" is here meant the Saena-merga (Untersuchungen, p. 75) there is the name Para-Uparisaina in Sagastan which is the name of the valleys of Gandhara south of the Uparisaina mountains (Marquart, Untersuchungen, p 76). It is when we have regard to these geographical Sagastan names that we can hit on the true meaning of Bahram Yasht verse 41 where the bird Saena is compared to clouds passing over and covering mountains.

I submit further that the present name of one of the mountains of Seistan—viz. Khoja Amrān—is also to be derived indirectly from the same bird Saena. The Saena became, in later mythology, the Sinamru (*S. B. E.*, Vol. XIII, p. 173, note 1); and it was called Amru for shortness. The word Amrān which is a part of the present name of the mountain is only the plural of the word Amru. The honorific title "Khoja" (lord) was prefixed to the bird on account of its sacred character. For centuries after the fall of the Persian Empire, the Zoroastrian faith and belief lingered on in Seistan; and even now in that region the sites of the old fire temples are honoured by adding the "Shah" after their name. Thus the site of the old fire temple at Karkuyeh is still respectfully called Karkushah (G. P. Tate, *Seistan*, pp. 206-211). Similarly, in the name "Khoja Amrān" the first word is an honorific prefix and, I submit, the whole name forms an additional proof of the dominance of the cult of the Mereg Sin in Seistan. My suggestion is strengthened by the fact that in older times some mountains in Seistan were

named after the crane bird—as Aparasaena and Para-aparasaena.

It was only in a region where the cult of the Saena was so strongly marked that it was possible to compare even tne angel of war with that bird. The land of Sagastan stretching from Bactria to Gandhara (Marquart, *op. cit.*, p. 242) was in the direct route of the great migration of the Saena cranes, and its inhabitants must have had unusual opportunities of admiring the flight of huge flocks of these birds over the Paropamisos range when they must have appeared to cover the mountains.

(4) If indeed the Yasht had been composed or its main ideas had been put together in Iran proper we could not doubt that its shape and its contents would have been very different. We cannot doubt that there would have appeared in it that magnificient march-past of the great warrior kings and heroes of Iran with which we are so familiar in other Yashts. Old Iran was very rich in martial kings and heroes and it was very proud of them. Even in hymns addressed to peaceful goddesses like Ashi and Aban the warriors take the first places and almost crowd out the other personages. In a hymn to Mars written in Iran proper we would naturally expect to see a culmination of the process and to have another little Shahnameh (as in Zamyad Yasht) to enrich our knowledge of history.*

* It is significant also that the Bahram Yasht does not contain certain beliefs which we have reason to believe were held in Persia proper about the angel Bahram. Tacitus has preserved for us one of these latter beliefs. We are told that "At stated periods, according to an ancient legend, Hercules inspired the dreams of the priests and in a vision, gave his orders, 'That a set of horses, ready for the chase, should be stationed near the temple. The hunters, accordingly, are drawn out well equipped with quivers and a store of arrows., Thus caparisoned, they stretch at full

But what do we find instead of that glorious military spectacle? The names of only two or three of the best known Persian kings are brought into a couple of verses (verses 39 and 40), as by a said wind and casually. This is exactly the extent of knowledge of Iranian history which we would expect in the Sakas after they had been "Iranicised" and had settled down. From that race, at an early historical period, we could not in reason expect a glowing sense of pride in the history and traditions of old Iran. Their position was peculiar, and sometimes a doubtful one, as regards Iranian race and culture. Indeed, while the Sakas south of the Paropamisus were accepted as allies of Iran, the position of their northern Kinsmen living in Saukavastan was regarded as a very anomalous one. They were regarded as allied to the Turanians; their king Agrirath was called the brother of Afrasyab, and the princes of their pastoral tribes were called Gopatshah (Bundahish, Ch. XXIX, 5 *S.B.E.*, Vol. 37, p. 117). Some manuscripts of the Dēnkart (Book IX Ch. 16 verse 14) indeed treat these Northern men of Saukvastan as foreigners. Even Firdausi while he treats the men of Sagistan as the strongest props of the Iranian throne often represents the "Saksâr" as fighting for Afrasyab. Dr. West thus concludes his discourse about the king of the people of Saukavastan:

speed through the woods, and, at the close of day, return to the temple without an arrow left, weary and panting for breath. The god appears again, in a midnight vision, to tell the priests the tracts of the forest where he pursued his game. After this information, deligent search is made and a large quantity of game, killed in the chase, is found in the woods." (Tacitus, Annals, Book XII, S. 13.)

This can refer only and obviously to the warrior angel of Persia-Bahram.

"All these forms of name imply that he was a king or master of oxen, and the Mino Khirad describes him as a Mazda-worshipping minotaur, on the sea-shore, probably the Caspian or the river Oxus" (*S.B.E.*, Vol. 37, p. 202, note 5). Marquart indeed would place the northern boundary of Sakas (Saka Tigra-chaudah) even further north on the Jaxartes (Marquart, *Untersuchungen*, p. 140). In his account of the inscription of Darius from Hamadan, Dr. Herzfeld considers that the Sakas inhabited regions to the North of the Caspian, the Aral and Jaxartes plains as well. (Cf. *Mem. Archaeol. Surv. Ind.*, No 34, p. 6-7).

(5) So we find that the men of Sagastan were eminently a pastoral race. And in the Bahram Yasht we have strong evidence that the Yasht was written in a pastoral *milieu*. It is only in such surroundings that in a hymnology to the god of war a passage could be introduced in the praise of the ox—a passage which has otherwise nothing to do with the subject of the Yasht and which interrupts the prayers to Bahram and the general description of his functions. This is verse 61 of the Yasht. The commentators have been so struck by the anomaly of such passages occurring in the Bahram Yasht that they have assumed them to be fragmentary additions (Lommel, *op. cit.*, p. 135).

Historical place-names like Parshad Gau and Dazgar Gau to be found in old Seistan are other proofs of the pastoral character of Sagastan (Farvardin Yasht verses 96 and 127). The name Parshad Gau, it deserves to be noted, lingered long in Seistan and has not quite dissappeared in our own times. The name of

Parshad Gau who according to the Dēnkart lived in Sagastan and to whom Zoroaster preached his religion is believed to survive in the name Post-i-Gau given to the very ancient ruins of a town in Seistan which is reputed to date from the time of Rustam (Tate, *Seisatn* pp. 187–188).

The name of the great apostle Seno is another great link between the legends in this Yasht and the land of Sagistan; for the name of the great family was no doubt derived from the bird cult of the Yasht. Indeed even if we had not learnt from the "wonders of Sagastan" that Seno was of that land, we could have made sure of that apostles' connection with Sakasten. For, apart from his bearing the name Saeno so well known in Sagastan, there is indirect evidence of his connection with that land. It is remarkable that in three separate places the names of Parshad Gau of Sagastan and of Seno are mentioned together in our religious works. This happens twice in Farvardin Yasht (verses 96-97 and 126-127). The third occasion on which this juxtaposition occurs is even more significant. In Dēnkart Book IX Ch. 24 verse 17 (*S B.E.*, Vol. 37, p. 230) the juxtaposition seems deliberate—Seno being placed next to Parshad Gauo in defiance of all chronological considerations. In fact, in order to place him next to Parshad Gauo his name is placed before those of Vistasp, Frashostar and Gamasp. We must be sure that there existed some strong reason for this repeated juxtaposition even at the obvious sacrifice of chronological considerations. The reason might well have been that Seno was of the same

country as Parshad Gau and that he helped to propagate the faith in Sagastan.

(6) In another paper on "Astronomy and Astrology in Bahram Yasht" I have tried to show that in the first eleven sections of the Bahram Yasht there has been formulated a Zodiacal scheme and that the names of the bull, the horse, etc. are names of star groups and of Zodiacal signs. I have tried to demonstrate the equivalence of the scheme of "incarnations" in the early part of the Bahram Yasht and of our present day Zodiacal scheme as follows:—

| *Bahram Yasht* | *Our present scheme* |
|---|---|
| The wind | Libra |
| The bull | Taurus |
| The horse | Sagittarius |
| The Camel | Leo |
| The boar | Virgo |
| The boy | Gemini |
| The raven | Scorpio |
| The ram | Aries |
| The buck | Capricornus |
| The warrior | Aquarius |
| The kara fish | Pisces. |

We see that the scheme in the Bahram Yasht omits the Lion of our Zodiac and substitutes for it the Camel. That was most probably because the scheme in the Yasht was formed in a region where the Lion was not to be found. For it is the same idea of sovereignty that is sought to be expressed by the Lion and the Camel as Zodiacal symbols. Generally the Lion is accepted as the symbol of royalty; but so is the

Camel in Bahram Yasht verse 13 where we read of the camel as standing in the pose of an autocratic ruler.

The inference from this substitution of the camel for lion, is that the scheme of the Yasht was formed not in Persia proper (where the lion is well-known) but somewhere further north towards Central Asia. The scheme in the Yasht must have been formulated in a region where Persian influences were predominant but where Chinese influences were not absent. It was also a region where the two-humped camel was to be found in abundance, since the Yasht gives a detailed description of its habits. Such a region could obviously be found only in the part of Central Asia where the Sakas had settled. The Saka country stretched from Bactria to Gandhar as Marquart has shown. These Sakas had been Iranisised and yet they were near enough to China to have exchange of legends and miths.

(7) I would draw attention to curious tradition surviving until our own days which Seistan which reminds us strongly of certain injunctions in the Bahram Yasht. In verse 55 the complaint is made that certain people transgress the rules of worship by bringing to the sacred fire "the plant that is called Haperesi, the wood that is called Nemetka." The commentators are agreed that Nemetka (from "nam" moisture) is some sort of wood with much moisture in it and which would not burn well. Such an injuction would be particularly appropriate in the case of a country like Sagastan which contains marshy tracts: since the wood growing in such places would be "Nemetka" and unfit to be used to keep up the

sacred fire. Curiously enough the old injunction has survived in Seistan to our own times. Thus Tate in his work on Seistan (p. 244) records a tradition preserved orally in an old family of that country about the kind of wood used in keeping up the fire in the old and historical fire-temple of the city of Trakun in Seistan—"The wood of the Tagaz, the variety of the tamarisk which grows and thrives only in the waterless tracts, was alone used for maintaining the sacred fire. Tagaz fuel burns well giving a clear flame with a minimum of smoke and burns into a clean ash which can easily be romoved. Other kinds of tamarisk wood, on the other hand have a marked tendency to smoulder, and give forth a great deal of smoke." It is perhaps not a mere coincidence that the only living tradition corresponding to the injuction in the Bahram Yasht which we have quoted above survives in Seistan.*

(8) But the importance of this verse in indicating the region in which the Yasht originated is even greater than would *prima facie* supposed. Let us turn to the "Vyambura" Daevas mentioned in the verse and examine their identity. Commentators like Darmesteter leave this proper name unexplained and hence it becomes us to walk warily here. As it happens fortunately however in the Pahlavi Bahman Yasht III, 77, (*S.B.E.*, Vol. V, p. 221) we meet

* It is also noteworthy that in another way too the great fire-temple of Seistan—that of Karkuyeh was picturesquely reminiscent of the Bahram Yasht. For as Makrizi says "the edifice was surmounted by two domes each topped off by a curving horn." This reminds us of Bahram Yasht, verses 7 and 23. where the bull and the ram—two incarnations of the Angel are described as equipped with horns.

the name slightly changed in Pahlavi—"Bambo." The Yasht is describing the march of Vahram the Varjavand from India to conquer Persia. Assisted by the men of Sagastan, Hirat and Khurasan he marches to "Bambo". Dr. West has very judiciously identified the place Bambo with Bamm and Bampur region on the way to Kirman (*S.B.E.*, V, p. 222, note). It might be added in support of West's supposition that a prince marching from India *via* Afghanistan to conquer Persia would have to advance by way of Bamm or Bampur to Kirman.

Now the inhabitants of Bamm or "Bampur" (the Vyamburas of Bahram Yasht, verse 55) would be well known to Sagastan people as being close neighbours. Certainly they were backward in civilisation in the age of the Yasht—they are so even now—and just as the backward inhabitants of Mazenderan and Varen in the north were called Daevas by their more civilised neighbours, so the comparatively backward people of Bamm or Bampur (Vyamburas) were also looked downed upon by the men of Sagastan. It was to be expected that the Saka inhabitants of Seistan were at feud with the Semi-Balochi inhabitants of the region of Bamm and Bampur. The hostility shown in the Bahram Yasht to the Vyamburas was obviously not dispelled with time, and even so late as the 18th century Seistan experienced raids from the Biloch tribes of Bamm and Bampur (see Tate, *Seistan*, pp. 93–94). During that century there has been a "great influx of the Balochi tribes into Seistan." The epithet "Daeva" applied by the Yasht

to the men of "Bampur" (Vyambura) is to some extent justified by the marauding habits of the Baloch tribes; and the bloodshed caused by their turbulence is referred to in the Yasht where the Vyambura are said to "make the blood flow and to spill it like water" (verse 54). Geographical names like "Duzdab" (the river infested by robbers) which are still to be met with in the region to which the Yashta refers as "Vyambura" remind us of the description of skulking marauders described in verse 56: the daevas "bow their backs, bend their waists, arrange all their limbs, they think they will smite."

I have shown in this paper the close analogy between a number of legends in the Bahram Yasht and old Chinese legends. I have further suggested the probability of the basic ideas of that Yasht having originated in old Sagastan. It is not irrelevant to this line of thought to point out the survival in modern Seistan of a very old Chinese legend. The men of Seistan account for the destruction of their ancient city of Sar-o-Tar by narrating a story which has close affinities with a famous Chinese myth. "All of a sudden, 1072 years ago, for no assigned reason an animal of the size of a fax made its appearance in the country. This animal had a tail, many yards in length, and wherever it went the crops were destroyed and the inhabitants lost their lives. The evil spirit who was responsible for this destruction of property took up its abode in Sar-o-Tar and for forty years that place was rendered uninhabitable" (Tate, *Seistan* p. 232).

Now in China the fox is regarded as a demoniac animal and the vehicle of evil spirits. It can transform itself into a human being in order to torment mankind; it is also credited with the power of producing fire by striking the earth with its tail. Those who wish to study specimens of the extensive fox-myths of China can consult the works of De Groot or De Harlez's *Le Livre des Esprits et des Immortels*. But what is more, there was the famous "male fox with nine tails" which had extraordinary powers of wasting lands and which was at last killed by the "Divine Archer" called Yi (Granet; *Danses et Legendes*, pp. 342 and 378). The analogy of this wide-wasting fox of nine tails with the long-tailed fox which devasted Seistan from Sar-a-Tar is obvious. I would add that in an earlier paper on "Some Shahnameh Legends and their Chinese Parallels," I have shown the close resemblance between the exploits of Kereshasp the great hero of Sagastan and of the "Divine Archer" of Chinese legends. Among other similarities in the careers of the two heroes it might be mentioned that the destruction of the wolf Kapod by Kereshasp was an exploit very analogous to the achievement of the "Divine Archer" in killing the fox with nine tails. It is interesting in connection with the comparison to find legends of the maleficent and devastating fox still surviving in Seistan—the land of Kereshasp. It is a living instance of the connection of the old legends of China with those of Sagastan and Iran which has been my thesis in several papers which I have published.

No student of the religious legends of Sagastan can but help pay tribute to the work of Mr. Tate in the valuable memoir on Seistan. If his work is carried on further by archæologists it might help to solve important problems in the religous history of Iran.

# 3

# ASTRONOMY AND ASTROLOGY IN THE BAHRAM YASHT.*

In the present thesis an attempt will be made to interpret the Bahram Yasht in the light of astronomy as well as of astrology. As the result of the analysis and the interpretation of the Yasht with the help of astronomical and astrological concepts, it will appear that the first half of the Yasht contains a complete Zodiacal scheme of which the individual elements are expressed in terms suitable for and appropriate to the followers of the cult of Bahram (or Mars). In the second place, we shall find that the marvellous gifts attributed by the Yasht to Bahram are also in strict accordance with the dicta of astrological authorities. In the third place, additional arguments will be brought forward in favour of the view which I have already expounded before the Asiatic Society of Bengal to the effect that the "radiated figure", in a well-known sculpture on the Tak-i-Bostan is that of the angel Bahram.

## The Method of Study Adopted.

No doubt in the eyes of the vast majority of the *savants*, to whom this discourse is submitted, astrology is a science of blunders—not of wonders—and is to be condemned at sight. But when interpreting ancient documents we have to pay due regard to views which

* Issued in the Journal and Proceedings, Asiatic Society of Bengal 19th August, 1929.

were widely spread in former days and were regarded as true and fundamental by the ancients. It is particularly important to apply this method to a Yasht like Bahram Yasht which yet retains to a great extent its original astronomical aspect and has not been "ethicised" like so many other Yashts. It is submitted that, on account of this process, the method proposed to be adopted here is hardly likely to succeed with the other Yashts, but its application will be most fruitful in the case of Bahram Yasht. That in ancient Persia, Astrology was applied to the task of interpreting the Yashts is obvious from a passage in Bundehesh VII, 4 where we read that "Tishtar was converted into three forms, the form of a ram and the form of a horse and the form of a bull... As the astrologers say that every constellation has three forms." Here we have the old priesthood emphasizing the necessity of using astrological concepts in interpreting the Yashts—an example and warrant for our procedure. Nor are other indications wanting of the interest taken in the astrolgical aspects of the planet Mars. Thus, in the Epistles of Manuschihar, (Ch. 2, s. 9), we read that Mars in the direction of Padramgosh sends much good (*S.B.E.*, Vol. XVIII, p. 334).

For facility of reference on the part of the reader, some text-book of astrology had to be fixed upon which was well-known, which carried high authority, which was of ancient date and of which good translations existed; all these desiderata are satisfied by the famous work of the astrologer Varah Mihira—the Brihajjatakam. There are two translations of this work easily accessible. At the same time, this work has

been singled out only for facility of reference, and any other text-book of astrology will impart that information of a rather elementary character which has been utilised here. What is required here is the application of only the elementary concepts of astrology, and no profound knowledge of that subject is either required of the reader or claimed by the writer.

## ANTIQUITY, AND LOCALITY OF FORMATION OF THE SCHEME IN THE YASHT.

There is every indication both of antiquity and of distinctive character in the Zodical scheme of the Bahram Yasht. To start with, the sign Cancer is not *specifically* mentioned and the absence of this name is evidence of the antiquity of the scheme. As we shall see the name "Libra did not exist in the Egyptian Zodiac and its place was occupied by the claws of the scorpion.' (Fosbrooke's *Encyclopædia of Antiquities*, Vol. 1, p. 222). Even in Virgil's days the space filled by it was regarded as "so much waste land" (*Encyclopædia Britannica*, Vol. 28, p. 994). Again, while a great many constellations are common to the Babylonian Zodiac and the Zodiacal scheme of the Yasht, there are two or three names of constellations which the latter scheme shares with the Chinese Zodiac. Thus, the raven or eagle, and the pig or boar, are common to the Chinese Zodiac and the Bahram Yasht.

It is obvious from the antiquity of the scheme of the Yasht, and from the mingling therein of the Chinese and Babylonian names of constellations, that the prosecution by expert astronomers of the inquiry inaugurated in this paper must prove of great value to

the history of Astronomy. It might easily throw important light on the old controversy as regards the origin of constellations and about our respective obligations to the Chinese, the Indians and the Babylonians as regards the naming of constellations (Cf. Dr. Thibaut's article in *Grundriss der Indo-Arischen Philologie*, band III, heft 9, pp. 14-15). Much has been written as to whether the Chinese borrowed their asterisms from the Arabs or the Arabs from the Chinese. Bentley observes in his great work on Hindu Astronomy that "he mentioned the circumstance to a learned Mahomedan, in the hope of getting some information, and his reply was, "that neither the Chinese borrowed from the Arabs, nor the Arabs from the Chinese; but that they both had borrowed from one and the same source which was from the people of a country to the North of Persia, and to the West or North-west of China." Now, it will appear from our present study that this was the very region in which the Zodiacal scheme of the Bahram Yasht was constructed.

Then there is the problem as to the locality in which the early observation of stars and constellations were made. There is a belief that "from 32 to 41 degrees northern were the certain limit of the station of the first founders of solar Zodiacal astronomy"; some authorities "think the region lay between the sources of the Oxus and India" (Proctor, *Myths and Marvels of Astronomy*, p. 361). For, the position from which the observations were made "must have counted for something in determining the association between a

star-group and a known object," *e.g.*, a lion or a camel (*Ibid.* p. 340). From this point of view, too, the study of the names of star-groups in the Bahram Yasht by experts is bound to be very fruitful. Fortunately, the Yasht itself furnished us with valuable data regarding the approximate locality in which its Zodiacal scheme was formed. The most important factors in deciding this question are the presence of the Camel and the absence of the Lion. It is to be emphasized that S. 4 of Bahram Yasht uses the phrase "large humps" in describing the camel and thus invites attention to the fact that it was a Bactrian camel that was intended to be described. The Yasht, indeed, goes on still further to specialise the matter and adds that it is a "burden-bearing camel" or a tame camel that was being described, and thus distinguishes it from the wild camel which still flourishes in Central Asia. The writer of the Yasht was fully aware of the details of the life history of the camel—its being covered with the scars obtained in its fights, its keen and eerie powers of sight and locomotion and the phenomena of its rutting season. Such knowledge could only have been obtained in Central Asia. Indeed, the best commentary on this section of Bahram Yasht is constituted by some passages in Sven Hedin's *Travels in Central Asia.*

The absence of the Lion from the scheme in the Yasht is also very significant. The lion was not a denizen of northern Persia, let alone Central Asia. Agassiz asserts "that the species has always kept within its original boundaries." (Andrew Murray,

*Geographical Distribution of Mammals*, p. 94). Thus this factor also points to some region in Central Asia as the place of the composition of the Zodiacal scheme under review.

Lastly, we have to consider the fact that in our scheme are included some names of constellations which indicate, if not a borrowing from Chinese sources, some common influences. The reference to the "Mereg-sin" (the Chinese bird) in the Yasht is an admission of some obligation to Chinese symbolism. One of the names of the constellations in the Yasht is the Vareghna which has been translated as the Raven. Now it is significant that in China the Raven is regarded as a spectre-bird (De Groot, *Religious System of China*, Vol. V, pp. 634–640). Again, in China "the sun is symbolized by the figure of a raven in a circle" (Werner, *Myths and Legends of China*, p. 176). The same bird as described in S. 7 of the Bahram Yasht is reminiscent of the bird of Dawn as described in ancient Chinese classics (See Werner, *op. cit.*, pp. 186–187).

We might then conclude that the Zodiacal scheme of the Bahram Yasht is a very ancient one and was composed in some region of Central Asia which was near enough to China to permit of an exchange of astral symbolism.

## PARALLELISM OF THE SCHEME OF THE YASHT AND OUR PRESENT-DAY ZODIACAL SCHEME.

Before proceeding further, let us give the names which our Yasht assigns to the Zadiacal figures. We

shall give the names of these figures and opposite each of them the section of the Yasht in which it is described or introduced in it.

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | The wind | ... | Bahram | Yasht | S. 1 |
| 2. | The bull | ... | ,, | ,, | S. 2 |
| 3. | The horse | ... | ,, | ,, | S. 3 |
| 4. | The camel | ... | ,, | ,, | S. 4 |
| 5. | The boar | ... | ,, | ,, | S. 5 |
| 6. | The boy | ... | ,, | ,, | S. 6 |
| 7. | The raven | ... | ,, | ,, | S. 7 |
| 8. | The ram | ... | ,, | ,, | S. 8 |
| 9. | The goat | ... | ,, | ,, | S. 9 |
| 10. | The warrior | ... | ,, | ,, | S. 10 |
| 11. | The Kara fish | ... | ,, | ,, | S. 11 |

It is obvious that one of the constellations has been left out. The reasons for not mentioning explicitly the constellation Cancer in the Bahram Yasht will be given later.

In order to demonstrate the correspondence of the scheme of star-groups in the Yasht with the Zodiacal scheme prevalent in our own days, we shall have to classify the constellations into groups and it is here that the ideas of astrology will be so helpful to us. We have to take account of the age-long division of the constellations into the well-known Triplicities of fire, air, earth and water; for the two classifications correspond fairly well. Among these groups we must naturally place the fiery triplicity at the top, since the nature of Mars is fiery. For the same reason the watery triplicity is placed at the bottom, since the "Neecha" or "depression sign" of Mars is in the watery constellation

Cancer (Brihajjatakam, Ch. 1, verse 13) and because they are all "cadent" houses. These triplicities were well-known in the Sassanide age and even to much earlier ages. For we find in the Rashnu Yasht a classification of constellations according to those "that have the seed of water in them" (the Watery triplicity) and those that have the seed of earth in them (Earthy triplicity). Thus we are warranted by the beliefs of the age of the Avesta in classifying the constellations on the well-known lines of the triplicities.

Again, in each triplicity the signs are arranged or graded in the order of their congeniality to Mars. Thus Aries is put on the same side as Capricornus, because Mars is the "lord of Aries" while Capricornus is the "Exaltation sign of Mars" (*Ibid.*, Ch. I, verse 13). Pisces is put on the same side, as Mars is exalted in a part of it (*Ibid*). Arranging the constellations according to these simple astrological principles we get the following scheme of the Zodiac as regarded by the followers of the cult of Bahram or Mars:—

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Aries (Ram, s. 8) | Leo (Camel, s. 4) | Sagittarius (Horse, s. 3) | Fiery Triplicity |
| Capricornus (Buck, s. 9) | Virgo (Boar. s. 5) | Taurus (Bull, s. 2) | Earthy Triplicity |
| Aquarius (Hero, s. 10) | Gemini (The boy, s. 6) | Libra (The Wind, s. 1) | Airy Triplicity |
| Pisces (Kara fish, s. 11) | Scorpio (Raven, s. 7) | Cancer | Watery Triplicity |

In this scheme in each square we have put first the name of a constellation of the Zodiac; under it is given

the name of the constellation as given in the scheme of the Bahram Yasht together with the section of the Yasht in which it is mentioned.

### IDENTIFICATION OF THE INDIVIDUAL ZODIACAL CONSTELLATIONS.

Coming to identify the star-groups, as named in the Yasht, with those of the prevalent denomination we first note that in the Yasht we start with "the Wind", and we propose to identify it with the sign Libra. Now we know that the sign Libra remained unnamed even as late as the days of Virgil. As thus there was a gap in the Zodiacal scheme, what could be more natural than that this unnamed and unclaimed portion of the Windy triplicity should have been described after the triplicity itself and have been called "the Wind" in the Yasht? It was quite natural that in the absence of a specific name for this constellation the generic name of the Triplicity to which it belonged was made to do duty.

We can also explain in great measure why the Yasht began its enumeration of signs with Libra. The reason was that while in the watery triplicity Mars was in its "cadent houses", and in particular when it was in the sign Cancer the planet was in its depression sign. While its passing out of Cancer into Libra was, from the point of view of the cult of Mars, an auspicious incident in so far as it had left its house of depression.

(2) It need hardly be said that "the bull" mentioned in s. 2 of the Bahram Yasht is identical with

the sign Taurus. This sign appears under the same name in almost every system of Zodiacal signs.

(3) We have very good grounds indeed for identifying "horse" mentioned in Bahram Yasht s. 3 with the constellation Sagittarius. Even in the Western system of Astronomy, Sagittarius is, according to some, the Centaur Chiron who is half horse and half man (Brennand's *Hindu Astronomy*, p. 17, quoting from the *Encyclopœdia Metropolitana*). The Pahlavi writers called Sagittarius the "Nim-asp" (or half horse; Cf. Bundahesh 11, 2) which corresponds very closely with the idea of a Centaur. Thus we have traced the identity of Sagittarius and Centaur, half-man and half-horse.

(4) We now come to the sign Leo to which corresponds the sign of the Camel in the Bahram Yasht. The lion was not to be found in Central Asia where the Yasht was written. In other oountries where the lion was not a native other substitutes had to be found for him on the Zodiac. The Egyptian image of the Sphinx is supposed to have originated when "the solstice was at the point dividing the two constellations Leo and Virgo (Brennand. *op. cit.*, p. 13). In Central Asia, the camel with its body covered with scars of fights and with its keen and eerie powers of sight and locomotion would serve as a better representative of Mars than even the lion itself. We regard the lion as the royal animal; and in the same spirit the Bahram Ynsht speaks of the camel as "standing like a king." The ideals of a dignified and kingly bearing and great fighting strength which other

nations found in the lion were combined in Central Asia in the camel. It is the idea of royalty which is implied by the sign of Leo, and attributes of royalty are expressly ascribed to the camel by the Yasht.

(5) At first sight the Virgo of our modern Zodiac appears to be far removed from the Boar put in its place by the Bahram Yasht. But even that seeming gulf is spanned by comparative mythology. We discover that even in the celestial regions the beast is never far from beauty. In the Babylonian Zodiac the Virgo represented Ishtar which is identified with Venus (Jastrow, *Religion of Babylonia and Assyria*, pp. 370 and 459). This brings us to the "widely-spread nature myth" according to which the goddess (known as Venus or Ishtar) mourns for her admirer Tammuz, Adonis or Attis. The death of this admirer was always due to Mars who assumed the form of a boar to slay the former (Frazer, *Adonis, Attis, Osiris*, pp. 8 and 220). Consequently, to the worshippers of Mars (or Bahram), the constellation of the Virgo is pre-eminently that of the Boar.

(6) The identification of Gemini with "the boy of fifteen," in Bahram Yasht is based on the fact that in the Babylonian Zodiac Gemini was represented by two boys placed feet to feet (*Encyclopædia Britannica*, Vol. XXVIII, p. 994). We read in the same work that even in Rome "in the third month and sign, the building of the first city and the fratricidal brothers—Romulus and Remus of the Roman Legend—were brought to mind." The only difference between our

Zodiacal system and that of the Yasht is that the latter refers to one boy instead of two.

(7) The Scorpio of our own Zodiac was placed there as a symbol of darkness, because of the "definitive decline of the Sun's power after the autumnal equinox" (*Encyclopædia Britannica*, Vol. XXVIII, p. 994). Exactly the same idea of darkness and the decline of the Sun's power is well represented by the Raven in our Yasht. One can scarcely dispute the right of the Raven to represent the autumnal darkness. The appropriateness of the Raven as a symbol of autumn will be better appreciated when it is remembered that, in astrology, Mars indicated the season of Summer (Brihajjatakam, Ch. 11-12), and hence the sign of Scorpio or Raven expressed a decline in the power of Mars as well.

(8) The "wild beautiful ram" of the next section of the Yasht is of course the same as our sign of Aries. Astrologically it is the "exaltation sign" of Mars and thus specially identified with it. We read in Jastrow's work on the religion of Babylonia and Assyria why Mars (called Nergal by the Babylonians) came to be designated as the sheep or ram. The Babylonians regarded the Sun as the overseer or shepherd of the planets which were his sheep. Mars, however, was considered the sheep or ram *par excellence*, perhaps because of the intensity of his light (pp. 459-460). We note that in the Yasht the ram's horns are specially described, since among the Zodiacal constellations, Aries corresponds to the head, according to astrology.

(9) It is not difficult to identify the "fighting buck" mentioned in the 9th section of our Yasht with Capricornus. Indeed, in the Hindu representation of the Zodiac, Capricornus is endowed with the head of a buck (Brennand, *op. cit.*, p. 14, plate 11), and its figure is very similar in the ancient Egyptian Zodiac (*Ibid.*, plate 1). We note also the prevalence of the buck in Central Asia where the scheme of the Yasht was formed.

(10) Aquarius was represented, in the symbolism of Babylon, by the god Ramman (*Encyclopædia Britannica*, Vol. XXVIII, p. 994), who was the thunder-god and storm-god. As the god of thunder he fulfilled well the conception of Aquarius. At the same time, as presiding over the battle of the elements he came to be conceived as the god of war to whom Assyrian victories were ascribed (Jastrow, *op. cit.*, pp. 160–161). The description of the martial figure given in the tenth section of the Bahram Yasht is quite in accord with this idea; only, as befits a Martian concept of the god of war, the water jar is removed from his hands and a sword is substituted for it.

(11) Coming to the sign of Pisces we find that in our Yasht, section 11, Bahram is not specifically mentioned as appearing in the form of a fish. This is so probably for the reason that Mars, as the fiery planet, could not appropriately be made to appear in the guise of an aquatic being. But it is very significant that exactly in the eleventh section, where we would expect the sign Pisces to be described, we have a description of the Kara fish "that lives beneath the water." Nor, perhaps, is the resemblance of the name

of the Kara fish to the Indian name for Pisces—Makara—without significance.

(12) Having thus found that the Bahram Yasht deals with eleven out of the twelve signs of our Zodiac, we come to account for the significant omission of the twelfth sign that of the Cancer. Here, again, it is astrology that comes to our assistance, for according to it Cancer is the "neecha" or depression sign of Mars, and accordingly, the worshipper of Bahram might well avert his eyes from that cadent sign. We have to remember that the Bahram Yasht envisages the progress of that planet Mars not merely from the technically astronomical or astrological aspect, but also from the point of view of the worship of the planet with the object of obtaining some boon. With such an object it would not be advisable to worship the planet while it is in its "depression" sign. If the reader would consult the rules for planentary worship, say, the exposition of such rules on Sabaean lines by Prof. de Goeje before the sixth International Congress of Orientalists, he will find it stated that it is best to offer prayers to each planet at his period of exaltation; the positions of planetary depression are to be avoided by the devotee. Hence in the Bahram Yasht it was to be expected that the aspect of the planet in its "depression" would be passed over and not expressly mentioned. Consequently in the Martian liturgy before us we find no mention of Cancer. This position is in no way incosistent with the much later astrological dictum to be met with in the "Epistle of Manush-Chithra"

that "the Padramgosh position of Mars is a favourable one". The position is stated to be only *conditionally* favourable—if Mars is at the end of *and about to leave Concer*, and if the Sun and the Moon are in the latter part of Aquarius, and Saturn is in the first part of Aries. As the astrological text books inform us, the depression in Cancer lasts only for 28 degrees out of 30. (See notes to Brihajjatakam, Ch. 1, 13.) Hence the proposition laid down by the Pahlavi astrologers is in no way inconsistent with the general position that Mars has a generally unfavourable aspect when it is in Cancer.

### THE BOONS CNFRRED BY BAHRAM.

*(Bahram Yasht, Sec. 11–14.)*

Having occupied exactly the first half of its length in a presentation of the Zodical Scheme, our Yasht in the next three sections recounts the various boons which Bahram can confer. Here again Astrology confirms the dicta of the Yasht and helps us to interpret them. In fact, the Bahram Yasht is the one Yasht which has retained its former astrological and astronomical features so well that we can apply this method of interpretation to it with confidence and advantage. The boons which Bahram grants in the Yasht are exactly those which astrology endows Mars with the capacity to confer. Thus the Bahram Yasht in its verses 12, 29, 31 and 33 states that the angel Bahram can confer the gift of a brilliant eye-sight—such eye-sight as the horse, the vulture, the Kara fish or the camel possesses. That reminds us that, according to astrolo-

gy, Mars rules the eyes (Cf. the Jyotish Kalpa Brikkha), and as a corollary of this position he can endow one whom he favours with bright eye-sight. Hence in Bahram Yasht, section 11, he endows Zoroaster with such eye-sight. But contrariwise, if Mars is unfavourable, he can deprive one of the powers of sight. Hence, among the Sabaeans who held the astrological religion, Mars was called الملك الاعمى, *i.e.*, the king of the blind. Chwolsohn in his great work (*Die Ssabier und der Ssabismus*, Vol. 11, pp. 24 and 188) was at a loss to account for the expression; but Prof. de Goeje commenting on the same expression showed that if Mars had the power of improving eye-sight, he was also in a position to take away the powers of sight if he was in an unfavourable position.

Then again, Bahram endows Zoroaster with "the strenghth of the arms." So also works on astrology tell us that a person borm with Mars in the signs Gemini or virgo will have a great capacity for fighting (Cf. Aiyar's Edition of Brihajjatakam, p. 174). In Astrology, Gemini governs lungs and arms, and an auspicius Mars can strenghthen these limbs. The other gifts said to have been conferred on Zoroaster in the Bahram Yasht could also be shown to be corollaries of astrological dicta.

### IDENTITY OF THE "FIGURE WITH THE HALO" IN A TAK-I-BOSTAN SCULPTURE.

In a paper read before the Asiatic Society of Bengal I have argued that the figure with the nimbus of Sun-rays on the well-known sculpture on the Tak-i-Bostan was to be identified with the angel Bahram.

The argument in that essay proceeded on archæological and historical grounds; but I am now in a position to corroborate my thesis on astrological grounds. The first point on which astrology can throw light is the expression "delicate-heeled" or "thin-heeled" in the Bahram Yasht, verse 17. In a foot-note to my above-mentioned essay I drew attention to the analogy between these delicate or weak feet thus ascribed to Mars and Bahram and the legends of the vulnerable feet of great warriors like Achilles, Krishna and Gandarewa. The problem of this curious combination of great strength with weak feet can be solved, as I am going to show, by astrology. For, among the Zodiacal constellations Aries forms the head and Pisces the feet as our table shows, (Cf. Brihajjatakam, Ch. I, verse 4 and verse 13). Now the depression sign of Mars is in the watery triplicity, and hence Mars is weak in Pisces or the feet.

The designer of the figure with the nimbus on the Tak-i-Bastan was well-versed both in Avesta and in astrology, as was only to be expected from a member of the priestly order in the Sassanide age. The whole figure in question is so figured as to fulfil the astrological symbolism of Mars of Bahram. Thus Mars has his "exaltation" in the fiery triplicity, and his "depression" in the watery triplicity. Corresponding to this the figure has fiery rays emerging from his head while his feet are small and rest on the water-flower. Both the small feet and the lotus indicate a reference to the watery tripicity containing Pisces and Cancer which are the "cadent" houses of Mars. But further, when

the garden of the Tak-i-Bostan was better kept than it is now—as it was under the Sassanides—the scene must have been very realistic with the lotus at the feet of the figure appearing to float on the water overflowing from the pond at the feet of the sculpture, and the fishes floating on the pond forming a living representation of the constellation Pisces in the heavens.

Many other features of the figure with the nimbus can be explained with the help of our astrological data. Thus the figure appears more youthful and shorter than the other two figures of the sculpture. This reminds us of the dictum of astrology that "Mars is not of a tall figure" (Brihajjatakam, 11, 4), and "has a youthful body" (*Ibid*, 11, 9). He has "also a narrow middle" *(Ibid.)* as we see in the figure we are considering.

A pertinent question might be asked here—why did the iconoclast of a later age smash only the region of the eyes of the figure before us in the whole sculpture? An answer can be suggested in the light of our study. The Yasht in verse 17 emphasises "the shining clear eyes" possessed by Bahram. As we have seen also this feature of Mars was emphasised by all astrological descriptions. Presumably, the sculptor, in order to make the figure correspond to this description had endowed the former with specially prominent and expressive eyes. But, in the opinion of the ignorant iconoclast this, constituted a special crime, and he concentrated his malice on that distinguishing feature of the figure.

APPLICATION OF OUR METHOD TO OTHER YASHTS.

The above line of study is most fruitful when applied to Bahram Yasht, since in other Yashts the ethicising process has gone so far and has so much become the dominating *motif* that the astronomical and astrological elements have been reduced to a position of less importance. The later belief that "planets belong to Ahriman" *Minokhirad*, VIII, 19 and *Bundahish*, III, 25; V. 1), might have helped that process (*S.B.E.*, XXIII p. 176, note 2). But there are still traces in several Yashts of the old astrological beliefs. Thus, in the Rashnu Yasht we have references to the astrological triplicities when stars are classified among those that have the seed of water, earth, etc., in them. A few reminiscences of the old astrological beliefs are to be found in the Ram Yasht also. In that Yasht, Vayu reminds us again of Libra (see above pp. 81 and 87) and of the influence of planets being in Libra. Thus, in verses 39–41, the maids desiring good husbands are said to pray to Vayu, and their request is granted. Now on referring to manuals of astrology, we find the following description of the effects of Mars being in Libra (which is the positive house of Venus), "Occasionally, marriage is very much delayed...The native is passionate and quick and may suffer through his affections." This is indeed a very exact description of the aspirants to matrimony mentioned in the Ram Yasht. It might be added that according to works on astrology, Jupiter in Libra is also fortunate for marriage.

We have already noted how the old Pahlavi commentators on Tir Yasht applied astrological notions

to the interpretation of that Yasht. Thus we are told in Bundahish VII, 4 that "Tishtar was converted into three forms, the form of a ram and the form of a horse and the form of a bull.....as the astrologers say that every constellation has three forms." The age and region in which the Tir Yasht was composed had developed further the idea of the worship of certain constellations in order to ward off the effects of the maleficent aspects of different planets. In particular, the constellation Haptoiringha was invoked to defeat the maleficent aspect of Mars. As Tishtra was an ally of Haptoiringha there are analogies between it and the Bahram Yasht, since to the constellation or star, which helps to defeat the maleficent aspects of Mars, is ascribed some of the qualities of the same planet when it is a beneficent aspect.

# 4

# THE SHAHNAMEH AND THE FÊNG-SHÊN-YÊN-I*

It happens very rarely indeed in the history of literature that two great epics belonging to different nations devote considerable space to the same or very similar legends and incidents. In the rare instances where such a phenomenon presents itself it is a fascinating task to trace the course of the migration of the legends in question. That is, of course, the first and the chief task of the literary historian in such a case. But this work needs to be supplemented by a study of the different ways in which the two epics handle the same material and utilise the various component elements of the legends and myths concerned. In instituting comparison between the ways in which the epics utilise the common traditions, myths, and legends we have of course to consider differences of national psychology as well as of questions of religious and historical atmosphere.

In some earlier papers, I have dealt at length with parallelisms between quite a number of legends and religious cults of ancient Persia and China. That study led me to institute a comparison between the epic portions of Shahnameh and the Fêng-Shên-Yên-I. The latter poem is the most popular and best known

* Issued in the Journal and Proceedings, Asiatic Society of Bengal 9th January, 1933.

collection of poetic and religious legends in China, just as in Persia, the Shahnameh easily holds the first place in the epics of Persia as regards poetic merit, epic grandeur, and popularity. The Chinese epic deals with the wars of the last emperor of the Yen dynasty and the action of human heroes in it has the fine background of the Taoist pantheon which retains almost intact the characters and personalities of the ancient Chinese religion and cults. A parallel study of the Chinese and Iranian epics will show a remarkably large number of affinities and correspondences between the heroic worlds of old Iran and ancient China. Mr. W. P. Ker and other students of epic poetry have remarked upon the resemblances between the Homeric and the Northern heroic world. But these resemblances are feeble and few as compared with the correspondences to be traced in the study of the Sino-Iranic epics. In the latter case the resemblances are wholesale. Sometimes, whole legends and characters are unmistakably common; at other times, incidents or poetic touches are found to have migrated. Thus the history and characters of the kiṅgs, Kai Kaus and Chou-wang, of the queens, Sudabeh and Su-Ta-Ki, and of the princes, Siawash and Yin-Kiao are wonderfully similar. So are also the accounts of heroes and warriors like Li Tsing and Rustam, of No-cha and Sohrab. When we come to account for these striking resemblances a good deal might be said for the theory that the Saka race which lay geographically between old Iran and China supplied most of the common legends, *viz*: the legends of Li Tsing and of Rustom, of No-cha and Sohrab; of the

queens, Sudabeh and Su Ta-Ki. These form the most important of the common stock of the Sino-Iranic legends; though, as we shall see, there are others like those of the demon Puladwand and the fighting magicians of Po-lu tao, and such as relate to the famous "combat of the eleven champions" ("Jang-e-Yāzdeh Rukh") which cannot be traced back at present to the Saka cycle of legends. However, some of the resemblances might also be supposed to be due to the conscious or unconscious borrowing of the ballad-mongers and reciters of the two countries. Thus, the legends of the Fêng-Shên-Yên-I are even now narrated and propagated by people who never read the book, as Dr. Wilhelm Grube informs us (cf. his translation of the Fêng-Shên-Yên-I, p. vi). On the other hand, the legends incorporated in the Shahnameh were to a large extent derived from ballads, as we learn from Firdausi:

چو از جمله این داستانها بسی  بخوانید خواننده بر هر کسی
جهان دل نهاده برین داستان  همه بخردان و همه داستان

[When the reciters had recited these numerous episodes the whole world was attracted and fascinated].

In a land of mixed population, such as Central Asia has always been, the legends of Iran and China would be brought into close contact, and transferences of legends, incidents, and characters were bound to take place through the medium of zealous ballad reciters—each of them eagerly desirous of improving and enriching his particular poetic repertory.

After we have seen the great similarity in the legendary figures of the emperors, Kai Kaus and Chou-

wang, and other personalities we shall realize the resemblance in the general topics of the two epics. The Fêng-Shên-Yên-I treats in the main of the events and wars of the reign of Chou-wang; and the immortals—whether gods, saints, genii, or demons—mixed freely in these events. The Chinese epic thus in a sense deals with the struggle of the good and evil powers in which the good powers finally succeed. So also the epic portion of the Shahnameh (as contrasted with the historical portion) deals mainly with the events and wars of the reign of Kai Kaus. To a certain extent supernatural agency is employed in the Persian epic also. But we might be sure that, in the pre-Islamic versions of the same episodes, the supernatural agency must have played a much greater part in that epos, as we see from certain survivals in the Pahlavi writings. Indeed, in the Bahman Yasht, the *wars of Kai-Kaus are represented as a tremendous contest between demons and archangels* (S.B.E., vol. V, pp. 217–218). Thus, in an important sense the main topic of the Feng-Shen-Yen-I as well as of the epos of old Iran is identical—a great struggle in which gods, saints, angels, and ordinary men take part and in which the just cause finally triumphs.

However, the Iranian epic in its present shape makes far less use of supernatural agency than the Chinese poem: and in this lies both an element of weakness and of strength for the former. In the Feng-Shen-Yen-I, too wide a scope has been given to supernatural interposition and action, and the gods and genii interfere too much in the main action of the poem.

Moreover, the weapons used by the saints and the genii in their warfare are most peculiar and give a very unreal appearance to the combats and giants. Wonderful amulets, bracelets, magical pearls, and other paraphernalia of spiritual warfare are much too freely employed, and tax the imagination and belief of the reader rather severely. Again the whole Taoist pantheon is brought in somewhat unnecessarily, and so many gods, saints, and demons take a hand in the war that the reader is perplexed and the stage is overcrowded. The Shahnameh, on the other hand, makes a restrained use of the supernatural agency, though occasionally we come across an angel and, somewhat oftener, we encounter demons. The combats are therefore more realistic, though we miss the brilliant colouring to which we are accustomed in the Chinese Saga. However, we might be sure that had the Shahnameh been written a few centuries earlier, say in the Sassanide age, much more use would have been made of the supernatural machinery. For the Avesta and the Pahlavi accounts love to endow their heroes with supernatural powers and exploits. But Firdausi had fallen on a sceptical age, and one which was particularly inclined to disbelieve the marvels described in works relating to the earlier religion and cults of Iran.

This reminds us of a remark made by a learned and careful sudent of epic poetry. "There is a double way of escape for young nations from their outgrown fables and mythologies. They start with enormous, monstrous, and inhuman beliefs and stories. Either they may work their way out of them, by gradual

rejection of the grosser ingredients, to something more or less positive and rational; or else they may take up the myths and transmute them into poetry." (Cf. W.P. Ker, Epic and Romance, p. 40). Both these processes can be traced in the Shahnameh; but, in the case of the Chinese epic, it was particularly difficult to get rid of the older mythological personages and machinery since they were deeply imbedded in the Taoistic and popular beliefs.

From the artistic point of view, the Feng-Shen-Yen-I enjoys one great advantage over the Shahnameh. It is a work which has been polished, and in a way, edited and re-edited by numerous and nameless Taoist poets and priests. It was so far from being the work of a single hand that we do not know the name of even a reputed author. In short, the Chinese epic is the result of a long process of evolution amidst an eminently literary class of readers and hearers. Consequently, the unity of the plot is well maintained, the issues of the story are made clear, the action of the poem is on the proper scale and even the accessories are heroic and magnificent. The ethical implication of each career is well brought about and the march of destiny towards a great pre-ordained event is emphasised all along. In the case of the Shahnameh, on the other hand, the selection from amongst the widely scattered materials and the arrangement of the selected material was the work of a single great poet. Fortunately, he was endowed with great genius—one which could at once interpret the Iranian race and its history and make a drama of his own out of it. Even so his genius was sometimes

oppressed by the magnitude of the task of putting together into a comprehensive whole the *disjecta membra* of a thousand traditions which had come down from a remote past. As he himself put it:

سخنها پراگنده بیراگند  چو اگنده شد مغز جان اگند

[Scattered material oppresses the mind; but when duly arranged it makes happy the mind and the soul.]

After these preliminary comparison of the general character of the two epics we might take up the study of the parallel features to be found among them.

KAUS AND CHOU WANG.

The Chinese epic describes the Emperor Chou Wang as weak, uxorious, and addicted to wine and women. Under the influence of bad advice such as was given to him copiously by Su-Ta-Ki—his chief female favourite and his evil genius—he could also be extremely cruel on occasions. In fact, most of his defects and shortcomings were due to his susceptibility to female influence. Thus it was under the influence of Su-Ta-Ki, that the virtuous prince Yin Kiao was persecuted and at last driven to join his father's enemies (Grube—Translation of Feng-Shen-Yen-I, 602). It was also under her influence that the famous "furnace" was instituted by the emperor for torturing those who had incurred his displeasure. As a matter of fact most of the victims who had to pass through this "fiery furnace" were the friends and champions of the prince Yin Kiao.

Now it is a very significant fact that in the Shahnameh the character of King Kaus is painted on

exactly the same lines as that of Chou Wang in the Chinese epic—and this in spite of the fact that there is no warrant either in the Avesta or in the Pahlavi writings for thus darkening the character of Kaus. Indeed in the Avesta (Yt. 5,45), Kawa Usa (so far from being considered a weak tyrant given to wine and women) is specially characterised as a powerful king who exercised the highest sovereignty over all lands in the earth. So also in Yt. 19, 71 he is mentioned with high respect being "as a strong, powerful, bold king and cavalier". Even in the Pahlavi writings he is highly honoured and is at the worst described only as somewhat wayward and fond of adventure. Thus in the Dēnkart (Book VIII, 12) be is distinguished as "ruler and maintainer of royalty in the seven regions". And again in the same work (Book IX, chap. 22, v. 4–13) his great glory and conquests are eloquently described. It is true, that tempted by the demon Aeshma the king ventured to fly up to heaven and consequently came to grief; but this single experience suffered and the king "thereby became discreet" (*S.B.E.*, Vol. 37. p. 223).

Far different is the view of the Shahnameh as regards the character of Kai Kaus. It is obvious that there had been an accretion of later or foreign legends around his character which presented him in a very different light from that in which he is seen by Avesta and Pahlavi authorities. So strong was this new tendency to condemn Kai Kaus that Firdausi has had, from the first mention of him in the Shahnameh, to stigmatise him as a bad and weak king who could not

uphold the traditions of his ancestors. This condemnatory tone has in fact been assumed in the Shahnameh from the very accession of Kai Kaus, and his character has been summed up adversely before a single incident of his reign has been recorded. Thus Firdausi tells us even at the accession of that king

اگر شاخ بد خیزد از بیخ نیک  تو با بیخ تندی مباغاز نیک
گر او بفگنـــد فرو نام پدر  تو بیگانه خوانش مخوانش پسر

[If a bad branch springs from a good root you must not blame the good root. If a son disgraces a father's name and glory he is to be called a stranger rather than a son].

Such a complete change of tone towards Kai Kaus in the Iranian cycle of legends deserves to be accounted for; and the explanation can only be found in the close interrelation between the Chinese and the Iranian epics. Thus we have already seen that the Shahnameh attributes a character to Kai Kaus which is exactly the same as that of Chou Wang, but for which there is no warrant either in Avesta or Pahlavi works. But this is not all. The Shahnameh attributes to Kai Kaus many very important events of which there is no mention in Avesta or Pahlavi but which are strikingly paralleled in the history of Chou Wang. The Avesta does not mention the persecution of prince Siawash by his father and step-mother; and it has no knowledge either of the fiery ordeal to which Kai Kaus compelled his son to snbmit or of the fact that the prince was at last driven to take refuge with his father's enemies. But the Fêng-Shên-Yên-I and other Chinese authorities

give detailed particulars of very similar incidents in the reign of Chou Wang—so much so that a great part of the story of Kai Kaus reads like an Iranicised version of the legend of Chou Wang.

How are such parallelisms to be accounted for but by the reciprocal influence of the Iranian and the Chinese cycles of legends? Avowedly the Shahnameh (and its predecessor the Bastan-nameh) were both based on ballads and traditions which had circulated in Central Asia for many centuries; and Firdausi himself says these ballads were numerous, and popular.

We might be sure that the composers and reciters of these ballards tried hard to vary and enrich them by inserting any suitable epic material on which they could lay their hands; and the developed Chinese epos must have offered great temptations to reciters of romance. It had a highly evolved moral aspect, thanks to generations of Taoist thinking and editing; it had what a reciter of romances loves particularly—a rich instrumentality of gods, genii, and demons influencing human destiny. On the other hand, both the Iranian and Chinese romance writers and poets would naturally be attracted by the rich material offered by the legends of the war-like tribes of the Sakas which lay geographically betweeu Persia and China. Moreover, the legend of Prince Siawash had become a general favourite in Iran and must have received embellishments continuously from successive generations of poets and ballad-writers. Such a developed legend might in its turn have easily influenced Chinese epos. Some of the inter-connection between the legendary love

of Iran and China might also be attributed to the Buddhist priesthood who held an important position in parts of both countries and who were fond of drawing on history and legend in order to illustrate their moral teaching.

## SUDABEH (SU TA-KI).

If the creers and characters of the Emperors, Chou Wang and Kai Kaus, are very similarly represented in the epics so are the lives of their consorts—the two empresses Su Ta-Ki and Sudabeh. Even the resemblance in their names is striking, and might not be altogether without a significance; though there is no need to emphasise that point unduly. Both epics make the empress the evil genius of her husband, and the persecutor of virtuous princes whom they have tried in vain to seduce. Both poems give highly poetic accounts of their methods and powers of fascinating youths. In the Chinese epic to Su Ta-Ki is attributed the invention of the "roasting oven" for the destruction of her opponent. That corresponds to the ordeal of passing through the fire in the Shahnameh, and prince Siawash, who resisted the charms and opposed the desires of Sudabeh, was condemned to this penalty. The end of the two empresses is very similar. In the Shahnameh, Subabeh is put to death by the enraged Rustam, when news is received of the murder of prince Siawash. In the Feng-Shen-Yen-I the execution of Su Ta-Ki had to be carried out by the victorious commander Tzeya himself, since her beauty was so great that all other officers felt her fascination and refused to carry out the sentence.

Of the two empresses the character of Su Ta-Ki is painted in the darker colours. She is not only the step-mother who attempted to lead her step-son away from the path of virtue, and failing in that attempt persecuted him to his death. These dark shades of character she shares with Sudabeh. But Su Ta-Ki had many other crimes to answer for. For one thing, she intrigued against the position and the life of the former empress—Kiang, and had her put to a cruel death in order to prepare for her own rise. In the Shahnameh this episode of the rivalry of Sudabeh with the other queen is omitted, but it is significant that the mother of Siawash is described as being of a more lofty lineage than Sudabeh; in fact the former is described as descended from the great King Feridun and as related to Afrasiyab and to the hero Sam at tho same time. That she was made the chief queen of Iran is expressly stated in the Shahnameh:

بمشکوی زرین کنم شایدت  سر ماهرویان کنم بایدت

[You deserve that you should be taken to the golden seraglio, and to be made the chief of my beauties.]

Thus King Kaus makes her the head of his golden seraglio. But in the Shahnameh this mother of prince Siawash remains only a secondary figure, while in the Chinese poem the empress Kiang-Shih is one of the most dignified and tragic figures and her approaching cruel fate which was the result of the intrigues of Su Ta-Ki forms one of the most touching episodes. We notice that the Shahnameh does not overcharge the

picture of Sudabeh's cruelty. But in the Chinese poem Su Ta-Ki is made a monster of cruelty who devises tortures for her opponents like those of "the pool of scorpions" and of the "roasting oven."

As might be expected, the temptation scene—in which the beautiful but unscrupulous step-mother tries to seduce the young prince—is well painted in both epics; and here the artistic superiority rests with the Shahnameh. The empress pretends the greatest affection for her step-son and a desire to see him married to one of her own daughters; and, on this pretence, induces the emperor to send the prince to her palace. As the prince shows no signs of love for the young princesses, the empress (Sudabeh) assumes that it is her own ripe and mature beauty which has appealed to him and which has eclipsed the girlish charms of her daughters. She then proceeds to make a passionate appeal for his love. In the Chinese version the empress (Su Ta-Ki) sends for the prince Po Yi-Kao with whom she has fallen in love on the pretence that she desires him to instruct her in playing the lute (Grube, *op. cit.*, pp. 249–254). She then tries various feminine arts of winning the love of the prince, even plying him with drink for the purpose.

It has been asserted above that in the case of the Chinese epic the plot is better laid down and woven and is more consistently developed. The end of Su Ta-Ki (Sudabeh) illustrates this remark. Both the Iranian and the Chinese epic begin by treating Su Ta-Ki and Sudabeh as the evil genius of their husbands. In both works the emperors are misled into an uxorious

subservience by supernatural agency. In the Shahnameh it is the Eblis who determines to mislead King Kaus; while in the Chinese epic it is the offended goddess Nikua (or Niu-Kua) who directs the great Fox-demon to possess the soul of Su Ta-Ki in order to bring about the ruin of Chou-Wang. However, in the Shahnameh the supernatural agency is habitually minimised and is in the end forgotten; and Sudabeh's career and end are those of an ordinary dissolute and intriguing step-mother. Not so in the Feng-Shen-Yen-I. There Su Ta-Ki lives and dies as the personification of the Foxdemon. Her cruelties are of a demoniacal character and at her end she exerts her superhuman powers to escape the supreme penalty that awaited her.

### SIAWASH (YIN KIAO).

In this case again the two epics are dealing with virtually the same legend. A prince is depicted who is endowed with every virtue and yet he ends his career miserably—a victim to the persecution by a dissolute queen and step-mother and to the sullen anger of a feeble and uxorious father. According to both accounts, again, the son is compelled by circumstances to join his father's enemies and, later still, he loses his life at their hands. Finally, both princes were canonised and loved by the nations so which they belonged.

One of the finest episodes in the career of prince Siawash, as given in the Shahnameh, is the account of the ordeal by fire to which he was made to submit in order to prove his innocence. Kai Kaus order a couple of hundred men to pile up wood, pour naphtha on it and

light a mountain of fire (کوه اتش). But Siawash passes quite safely through it. The Chinese epic gives a more gruesome and realistic account of the "fiery furnace" prepared by order of king Chou-Wang. With the artistic and mechanical ingenuity, for which the Chinese are distinguished, a brazen column was constructed two fathoms high and eight feet in circumference. There were three openings in this hollow column for lighting fires and inserting the victim (Grube, 74). The first victim of this furnace was not, however, the prince himself (as in the Shahnameh) but his friend and advocate Chaoki who ventured to give advice to the emperor in favour of the prince and against the intrigues of the empress and step-mother. The burning of the skin and muscles of Chaoki and the reduction of his bones to ashes ars described realistically.

According to both epics the persecution by the step-mother at last drives the prince to seek refuge with his father's foe (Grube, 602). The Fêng-Shên-Yên-I indeed goes somewhat further and makes him bear arms for a time against his father though he gave up the design later (Grube, 655). This was an easier thing to represent in the Chinese poem, since the war between Chou-Wang and Wu-Wang was only a civil war in which it was the Chinese who fought the Chinese. In the Iranian *heldensaga,* however, it was quite impossible to imagine prince Siawash fighting his father on the side of the Turanian prince; nevertheless the author of Shahnameh is fully aware that the

Turanian enemy gained important advantage by the arrival of Siawash in Turan :

بخارا و سند و سمرقند و چاچ  سپنجاب وان کشور و تخت عاج
تهی کرد و شد با سپه سوی گنگ  بهانه نجست و فریب و درنگ

[ The prince evacuated Bukhara, Sind and Samarqand and Chaj as well as Sipanjab and went away to Gang without seeking for any delay or excuse ].

While in the Chinese epic the emperor sends generals to pursue his son, in the Shahnameh the father disgraces his son and sends the warrior Tus to relieve the prince of his command :

سپه طوس را ده تو خود باز گرد  نهٔ مرد پرخاش و جنگ و نبرد

[ Resign your command to Tus and return, for you are no soldier ].

In the description of the end of the prince Siawash ( Yin Kiao ) both epics show some resemblances which are worth noting. In both the prince is beheaded in a ghastly fashion by his father's enemies. In the Shahnameh, .Cersiwez (Keresawazda ) the brother of the Turanian king suggests to the latter that, though the Persian prince has taken refuge in Turan, he is still working in the interests of his father. The prince is therefore beheaded ; and it is added, that after he was beheaded, a certain variety of vegetation sprang up on the ground on which his blood had been shed. In the Chinese epic, too, the prince ( Yin Kiao ) met with his death on account of his loyalty to his father. Though at first he joins the party adverse to his father at the behest of a Taoist saint, he soon repents, and takes

part in the war—on the side of his father. He is captured later by his father's enemies and is buried in the ground so as to leave only his head on the surface. In this position a plough was driven over his head by a peasant and the prince was killed (Grube, 604). Thus, just as in the Shahnameh, the blood of the prince served to help the growth of vegetation.

In both epics, again, the spirit of the murdered prince is recognized as a powerful agent in giving warnings through dreams. In the Shahnameh the spirit of prince Siawash appears in a dream to the Persian commander Tus to encourage him to persevere in the war against Turanians. His spirit also appeared to the hero Gudarz in order to induce the latter to undertake a search for Kai Khusrau who was to avenge the murder on Afrasiyab. Similarly, in the Fêng-Shên-Yên-I, the spirit of the murdered prince appeared to his father (the emperor Chou-Wang) and warned him against evil ways which were leading him to ruin and defeat.

The ethical implications of the story of the prince Siawash (Yin Kiao) are better brought out in the Chinese than in the Iranian epic—as was only to be expected owing to the Taoist influence on the former. In the Shahnameh the story is a mere tragedy; the prince who is ever loyal to his father is persecuted by his step-mother, and is driven to Turan. The king of Turan receives him well at first, but later he suspects him of being too loyal to his father, and has him executed cruelly. In the Chinese epic, too, the prince (Yin Kiao) perishes on account of his overzealous sense

of duty to his father. But the ethical implication is more complicated, and points of casuistry arise. In fact, there was a conflict of duties in the case of the prince. On the one hand, it was his duty to avenge his mother who had been murdered by the order of that father and the step-mother. This latter duty was reinforced by the command of his Taoist preceptor who ordered him to take sides against his father (Grube, 602). In the end, however, Yin Kiao allowed himself to be persuaded to go to his father's assistance; and this disobedience to the commands of his Taoist preceptor involved the supreme penalty of death. Evidently, according to the Chinese epic, his duty to his deceased mother as well as to his preceptor outweighed his duty to an unworthy father. For in the Taoist system the duty of obedience to the spiritual preceptor outweighs all other duties. As the Taoist poem puts it; "I am afraid of my master, though I am not afraid of the Heavens" (Grube, 434).

## SOHRAB (NO-CHA).

A great portion of the Shahnameh—indeed much of the essentially epic portion of that poem—is occupied by the exploits of the Saka heroes—Kereŝaspa, Rustam and Sohrab. Almost all the exploits attributed to these heroes in the Iranian epic are ascribed in the Chinese accounts to the three heroes—the Divine Archer Yi, Li Tsing and the latter's son No-Cha. But while in the Shahnameh the lion's share of the exploit goes to Rustam, in the Chinese legends the Divine Archer and No-Cha share most of the honours. Indeed, in the

Feng-Shen-Yen-I, it is No-Cha who has the leading place among the three heroes. To him is attributed the exploit of killing the dragon-king of the waters, an exploit which corresponds to the conquest of Gandarewa by Kereśaspa. Again, the Feng-Shen-Yen-I attributes to No-Cha the conquest of the seven demons of Mei-Shan (Grube, 623–4) which corresponds to the seven labours of Rustam in Mazendaran (the famous "Haft-Khwan"). In fact No-Cha occupies a far larger space in the Chinese epic than Sohrab does in the Iranian account. The main reason for this is that, while in both epics, Sohrab (No-Cha) dies young, the Taoist saints of Feng-Shen-Yen-I have both the power and the will to revive the dead. In both epics, however, one of the most dramatic episodes is occupied with the fight between Sohrab (No-Cha) and his father Rustam (Li Tsing).

Naturally both epics make the most of the combat between such a father and such a son—and what is more to our purpose, quite a number of resemblances between the two narratives are noticeable. Thus the Feng-Shen-Yen-I remarks that No-Cha defeated and pursued his father thrice, ere he recognised him (Grube, 435). This reminds us that in the Shahnameh Rustam saves himself by persuading his opponent that a hero should be defeated several times ere he can be slain:—

کسی کو بکشتی نبرد اورد — سر مهتری زیر گرد اورد
نخستین که پشتش نهد بر زمین — نبرد سرش گرچه باشد بکین
اگر باز دیگرش زیر اورد — بانگندنش نام شیر اورد
روا باشد ار سر کند ز وجدا — بدین گونه بر باشد آئین ما

[Our rule is as regards wrestling that the defeated party is not to be killed on the occasion of the first defeat in the ring].

It was by such a stratagem that Rustam twice avoided death at the hand of his son. Twice according to the Persian account it was in the power of the son to kill the father and win the victory but the former generously forbore to make full use of his success:—

دوبارهٔ امسان دادم از کارزار  بپیریت بخشیدم ای نامدار

[Twice I have given you quarter and have had pity on your old age].

Both poems thus describe three encounters between father and son.

Both poems again represent the father as resorting to spiritual agency in order to escape destruction. In the Shahnameh, Rustam resorts to prayers in order to gain more strength for the final encounter. In the Chinese version Li Tsing (the father) takes refuge behind a Taoist saint who increases the old hero's strength by touching him on the back and spitting on him—a Taoist method of imparting strength (Grube, 193-5). It was then that the older hero got the upper hand and No-Cha was compelled to acknowledge him as his father and bow to him in humiliation (Grube, 194).

It might be noted also that in the Shahnameh Sohrab (like No-Cha in the Chinese poem) shows from his first appearance to the end a bitter hatred of King Kai-Kaus. From his earliest youth he declares war on him and tries his best to overthrow him. Indeed, he

proposes openly to bring his father over to his side with the object of overthrowing Kai-Kaus:—

ببرّم هم از گاه کاوس را  از ایران ببرم پی طوس را

[I shall uproot King Kai-Kaus from the throne of Persia and shall also cut off the general Tus].

The best explanation of this attitude of Sohrab towards Kai-Kaus is in the Chinese epic where No-Cha is one of the most bitter and consistent enemies of Chou-Wang. Indeed No-Cha had been revivified by the Taoist saint and reconciled to his father in order that he might help in the overthrow of Chou-Wang (Grube, 194). The aspirations of Sohrab to overthrow his sovereign corresponded exactly with the performance of No-Cha.

In the epic of Firdausi the episode of Sohrab is an unrelieved tragedy. The greatest and most promising hero of the legends of Sakastan and of the house of Rustam dies at an early age without redeeming the promise of his boyhood, having lived only long enough to identify and acknowledge his father. His sorrowing mother pines away in sorrow and loneliness. But things are managed quite differently in the Feng-Shen-Yen-I; for there the priestly authors have the gift of bringing the dead back to life. That نوشدارو (ambrosia) for which Rustam craved in vain, in order to bring back the young hero to life is easily at the disposal of the Taoist saints who are met with so often in the Chinese epic. No-cha (Sohrab) is brought back to life by his Taoist master; and, indeed, in the Chinese epic it is in this second phase of his existence that the hero's most

important exploits are performed (Grube, 182–186) and in which he carried on his immortal wars for great renown. For his master who worked his revivification supplied him with quite a number of miraculous weapons; and this insured his success in numerous other battles. It is to be noted that the very idea of the Shahnameh of the search of Ambrosia for the mortally wounded Sohrab implies the existence of another version of the story in which he is brought back from the dead. For in the case of no other hero of the Persian epic is there any such search after he is wounded to death. It is also noteworthy that while in the Shahnameh the glory of the "Haft-Khwan" or the accomplishment of seven great labours in Mazendaran is given to the father, in the Chinese story a similar great feat is ascribed to the son. For *according to the Persian poem it was the father who conquered the seven demons and wild beasts of Mazendran while the Chinese account makes the son (No-Cha) overcome the seven demons of Mei-Shan* (Grube, 623).

In the Shahnameh we are told that at the birth of Sohrab (No-chá) his father presented him with a jewel to be worn as a bracelet. According to this account the object of the bracelet was to serve as a recognition of the paternity of Sohrab. In the Chinese epic, too, No-Cha wears a bracelet which, however, was in itself a powerful weapon. No-Cha was born with this arm-ring and with that weapon he slew dragon-warriors (Grube, 162) and many other enemies. Miraculous weapons were not much in the line of the Persian epic, which was addressed to a people less imaginative than

the Chinese. One can therefore well imagine why the miraculous bracelet which served as a formidable weapon in the Chinese poem was relegated to an ornamental and secondary purpose in the Persian epic.

Dealing with the episode of Sohrab, the Shahnameh recounts the exploits of a heroine named Gurdafarid. She was the daughter of Hajir—the commandant of a border fortress of Iran. Her father having been taken prisoner she herself took the field against Sohrab and his allies, and performed great deeds of arms. It was not until she had abandoned the fortress that it was taken by Sohrab, who had meanwhile fallen in love with her.

This episode is found also in the Fêng-Shên-Yên-I in its entirety. The heroine whose Chinese name was Teng Chan-Yu was the daughter of the warrior Teng-Kin-Kung who commanded the fort San-Shan-Kuan. Her father being incapacitated by a wound in the shoulder, she herself took the field against Tzeya, No-cha and their allies and put to rout three of their chief heroes—Tzeya, Huang Tien-Hua, and Lung-Su-Hie. No-Cha vastly enjoyed this defeat of his friends by a mere girl (Grube, 594). In the end the fortress was taken by treachery, and it required the combined efforts of No-Cha and a whole squadron of warriors to secure the person of the war-like maid. The whole episode is the same both in the Shahnameh and in the Fêng-Shên-Yen-I, except the one important detail that the maid escapes capture in the Iranian account.

## THE SIMURGH (THE BIRD "RUKH").

We might now consider the famous "Simurgh" of the Shahnameh—that wonderful bird which helps and rescues the hero Rustam (who corresponds to Li-Tsing in the Chinese epic) so often in his wars. In fact Rustam would have deen vanquished and slain by the young hero Isfendiar, but for the help of this marvellous bird. The Chinese epic furnishes us with a very similar account of the bird "Rukh" and also in connection with Li-Tsing. In the shape of the saint Jan-teng tao-jen this miraculous bird helps Li-Tsing against the younger hero and saves the former's life. Only in the Chinese epic it is against No-Cha (Sohrab) that the bird protects the hero. Thus the mysterious bird has a double nature in the Chinese account—it is both a bird and a saint. This well illustrates what I have said in my paper on Bahram Yasht, read before the Asiatic Society of Bengal, about the etymology of the word Simurgh.

In The Chinese accounts the bird Sien-Ho, the crane, gets its name form its association with the "Sien" or hermits with which it is associated. The name "Simurgh" (in Avesta "Mereg-Sin") is formed by analogy—as a marvellous bird associated with one of the hermits or "Sien". This association is well illustrated by the case of the bird "Rukh" in the Feng-shen-Yen-I, which sometimes appears as a bird and sometimes as the hermit Jan-teng tao-jen. In the Chinese poem the bird sometimes fights on its own account against warlike and powerful magicians (Grube, 566 and 607) though by the side of Jan-teng.

## POLADWAND (THE MAGICIANS OF PO-LU-TAO).

As the great struggle described in the two epics drew near its crisis, new and more terrible devices were resorted to by the combatants. In the Chinese epic the party which was approaching defeat summoned to its assistance super-magicians from Po-lu-tao ("the island of ths white hart") and other remote places. Great battling magicians they were who for a time restored the fortunes of the party by which they were summoned; for in Po-lu-tao the friends of the party of Chou-Wang found and practised new arts of war which were forbidden by the code of Taoism (Grube, 550–553). So also, in the Shahnameh, Afrasiyab, who had tried in vain to conquer Iran with his army, resorted at last to the help of the demon Poladwand. Let us see how the Iranian poem describes this reinforcement:

چو مردم نماند ازمودیم دیو  چنین جنگ و پیکار و چندین غریو
و دیگر که این دیو ناسازگار  به تن سهمناک است و چیرهٔ سوار

[Since our men were exhausted we have to resort to demons of a battling and roaring nature. This evil demon has a fearful form and is a great cavalier].

It is further to be noted, as a very significant feature, that Poladwand is summoned to the Persian war from his home in the mountains of China.

دران کوهٔ چین اندرون جای اوی  نبود اندران بوم همتای اوی

[His abode was in the mountains of China and in that country he had no rival].

The summoning of the demon from the Chinese mountains to attack Iran reminds us of the Chinese

hermits residing on mountains like Kun-Lun—the abode of Taoist genii (Grube, 554) or Mt. Kiu-sien-shan (Grube, 119). Indeed the Feng-Shen-Yen-I introduces us to numerous such genii and hermits who descend into battle from their headquarters in inaccessible mountains. While therefore the Shahnameh introduces us to only one such demon or spirit coming from the Chinese mountain, the Feng-Shen-Yen-I furnishes us with accounts of numerous similar supernatural beings from mountains and islands. In particular, there are the ten "battle magicians" from the island of Kin-ao-tao (Grube, 549–et seq).

With the advent of these magical forces on both sides the war developed into a titanic struggle, and in dealing with it the Feng-Shen-Yen-I rises to new heights of sublimity. The flood of unholy magic and rites at first bore all before it. Even the most eminent warriors like No-Cha (Sohrab) went down before it (Grube, 547 and 595); and the great organizer and general of the good cause—Tzeya—had to be "relieved" of his command, which had to be conferred on a super-magician like Jan-teng (Grube, 566). A series of wonderful magical exploits are performed and the highest and most delicate supernatural machinery is utilised on either side.

In the Shahnameh too the fight between Rustam and Poladwand is described in fine poetic style; but there was unfortunately much less scope than in the Chinese version for sublimity and ingenuity. The hard-headed Persians could not be expected to appreciate the highly subtle and miraculous weapons which would appeal to the readers of the Chinese poem. To the

practical Persian race the final arbitrament of all combats—whether between mortals and demons—seemed to lie with the heavy mace. Consequently, Poladwand, though reputed to be a demon; has to take on Rustam with the ordinary weapons of ancient warfare—the sword and the mace. When Rustam could not kill the demon with mace or sword he seized the latter and dashed him on the ground with such force that all his bones were nearly broken. In fact, the treatment of the episode of Poladwand in the Shahnameh disapponits the expectations aroused in us as regards the warfare of demons; for the demon fails to exhibit any novel or special methods of fighting. The position taken up in the Chinese epic is certainly the more logical. Demons and magicians—supposing them to exist—cannot be got rid of by the commonplace methods of knocking them on the head with a mace or dashing them to the ground by a trick of wrestling.

Special attention has to be drawn to the fact that the Shahnameh shows a sequence or "block" of no less than three Chinese episodes—the stories of the Khaqan-i-Chin, of Poladwand and of Akwan Diw. This last demon, I hope, I have already elsewhere satisfactorily identified with Fei-Lien. In fact, when reading these episodes in the Iranian epic we are actually in the land of Feng-Shen-Yen-I; and in the adventures of Poladwand and Akwan we are certainly watching the reflections or shadows of the Titanic war of magicians narrated in the Chinese epic. Firdausi's description of Akwan—with his stag's body, leopard's colour and snake's tail-fully corresponds to Chinese accounts of

Fei-Lien. But above all in the methods of warfae exhibited by Akwan Diw we can trace much similarity to the methods of magical warfare usual in the Feng-Shen-Yen-I. Akwan Diw avoids the blows of even Rustam's sword and mace by changing himself into a blast of wind; and he flies away into the sky carrying Rustam with himself. Even apart from all this, Fei-Lien possesses unique interest and importance of the comparative study of the Shahnameh and the Feng-Shen-Yen-I. For in both epics he appears as a supporter of the defeated side, though in the Chinese epic Fei-Lien shows a treacherous character and would ge over at the end of the struggle to the victorious side.

"THE COMBAT OF THE ELEVEN" (جنگ یازده رخ)

As the epic struggle is about to terminate, it is very interesting to find that both in the Chinese and the Persian poems the same method is adopted of annihilating the defeated party. In both poems it is found impossible to get rid of the masses of great combatants arrayed against each other by the slow process of single combats. An *impasse* was obviously reached in both cases, and some extraordinary contrivance was required to clear the field of the superfluous masses of warriors and demons. A great combat is therefore arranged in both epics of eleven champions of the one side against eleven of the other party. The important business is arranged with the greatest ceremony. In the Shahnameh the commanders of the two sides (Gudarz and Pirān) have long *pourparlers* in which they devise these series of glorified combats and make

arrangements for their proper procedure. So also in the Feng-Shen-Yen-I, the commander of one side (Tai-Shih Wen) sends a formal challenge to the opposite general (Tzeya). The challenge was to the effect that Tai-Shih Wen with his ten battling magicians was ready to fight Tzeya and his champions in order to end the war (Grube, 567). The challenge was accepted by Tzeya and the two parties of warriors met in mortal combat. In both epics each side is assigned a hill as headquarters from which it descends into the combat.

Here again the treatment of the combat of "eleven against eleven" is less sublime in the Shahnameh than in the Feng-Shen-Yen-I; and that because of the obvious partiality of Firdausi to one of the sides. He takes care that not a single Iranian champion is killed or defeated in the series of eleven combats. This poetic injustice greatly diminishes the interest of the narrative.

Very differently is the business managed in the Chinese epic. Here there is no plain sailing even for the victorious party. The fears of their leader Jen-teng are very real and well founded. Not in vain does he sigh and observe that "in this age my ten companions will surely receive injuries" (Grube, 566). These fears were fully justified; for in the very first combat he lost Ten Hua, one of his best helpers (Grube, 567). It was only after many days' hard fighting and various losses that the party of Tzeya won the day; and their leader had to fly from the field to seek help from the immortal Chao-Kung-

ming (Grube, 581). It must, however, be admitted that in the Chinese poem the idea of a combat of eleven champions is sometimes departed from, as an occasional outsider mingles in the fray. It remains also to emphasise that in both epics the war is virtually ended with this "combat of eleven champions". In the Shahnameh, after "the combat of the eleven" King Afrasiyab is a fugitive. Gone are his old assistants and warriors; gone, too, is his faithful minister Pirān Wiseh—a good servant of a bad master whose character reminds us forcibly of that of Tai-Shih Wen who served the tyrant Chou-Wang so faithfully and so fruitlessly. The personal challenges which Afrasiyab and his son Shedah delivered later on to their foes, show too plainly that their army has been exhausted.

And finally what happens to Afasiyab when he has lost his crown and his army? He who had been the grand organiser of the war, he who had sent into the fight one after another Pirān Wiseh and Poladwand and the "eleven champions", and who had backed up prince Siawash against his father, was at last driven to conceal himself finally in the lake Chaichasta. The Shahnameh calls his refuge the "Hang-i-Afrasiyab" a word borrowed from the Avesta term "Hankan". Strangely enough the fate of the grand organizer of the struggle in the Feng-Shen-Yen-I was just the same. It was Shen-Kung-Pao who had sent forward one hero after another to espouse the party which was defeated in the end. He it was who had sent

into the war those who fought "the combat of the eleven" as well as warrios like Ma-Yuan and Lo-Suan and who had made prince Yin-Kiao take up arms against his father. It was also his fate to be imprisoned in a well or lake in the North Sea (Grube, 617).

Thus there is abundant proof of striking and unexpected resemblance between quite a number of episodes in the Shahnameh and the Feng-Shen-Yen-I. But what is even more significant is that the resemblances and parallelisms are not spread indiscriminately over the whole range of the works but are confined mainly to the legends relating to a small and clearly defined group of epic personalities. This observation will be of great use to us in tracing the source of the resemblances which we have noted. For, obviously, if the resemblances were due to a casual interchange of legends and ideas they would be spread evenly over the range of the works. As a matter of fact, however, the resemblances are concentrated in the main in the legends relating to a narrow circle of personalities. A mere enumeration of these personages will show that (according to the Shahnameh) they are all related to the Saka race and history. The parallelisms have been shown to be very closing in the matter of the stories relating to Sohrab (No-Cha) and Rustam (Li-Tsing) as well as those about the bird "Rukh" (Simurgh); and there is little need to remind the student of the Shahnameh that these personalities form the very centre of the cycle of Sakastan legends. There are also Sodabeh (Su-Ta-Ki), her husband King Kaus (Chou-Sin or Chou-Wang) and her step-son Siawash (Yin-

Kiao). These are also related to the Saka cycle of stories since Sudabeh is the daughter of the prince of Hamawaran who was a Saka chief as is shown by Firdausi. Here is the main proof of the obligations both of the Chinese and the Iranian epic to the Saka legends. These legends of a warlike and romantic race like the Sakas would have a strong attraction for both the producers and hearers of the ballads sung in Central Asia and Eastern Iran. In fact there are certain races whose romantic legends and poems have general appeal for their neighbours. Thus even to-day India borrows most of the provincial history of Rajputana which is largely peopled by the descendants of the same Sakas. But there was another motive which necessitated borrowings both on the part of China and Iran. The desire of the Iranian population for accounts of their old royalty was only equalled by the poverty of the annals regarding events and incidents. For the Avesta and the Pahlavi writings contain only occasional references to historical events. China had perhaps a little larger amount of authentic history. But, even so, and giving all credit to Sze-ma Tsien for his admirable work we cannot see very much material for the epic and the romance. The ballad-makers both of Iran and China were thus under the necessity of helping themselves to the material so abundantly offered by the Sakas.

While thus, in all probability, both the Iranian and the Chinese epic incorporated legends of the Sakas, we can see that in the Shahnameh they have been in a way kept apart, while they have been more closely incorpora-

ted in the Feng-Shen-Yen-I. In the latter poem the exploits of heroes like Li-Tsing and No-Cha (borrowed from the Saka cycle) are spread over the whole range of the poem and do not occupy any particular portion or portions of the epic by themselves. In the Shahnameh, however, there is noticeable a distinct tendency to keep apart the material drawn from Saka sources. Indeed when carefully examined, the Shahnameh shows alternate strata of purely Iranian and Sakaean material. This observation might be illustrated by a few examples. Thus tha wars of Rustam in Mazendran and his combat with Sohrab form the first stratum of almost purely Saka legend. After that the Shahnameh goes on with the career of Siawash and the rise of Kai Khusrau to royalty in which Rustam plays but a secondary part, and which might be therefore termed a purely Iranian stratum or portion. This is followed by another purely Iranian chapter—*viz:* the one dealing with wars of the heroes Gudarz and Tus and their family with Pirān-Wisa and his Turanian hordes. Then succeeds another purely Sakaean chapter which narrates the successes of Rustam against the Kushans, the Chinese (under their Khagan) and the Indians (represented by Shangal). After this Firdausi resumes the wars of the families of Gudarz and Pirān and we hear little of Rustam. Even in the final episode of the ruin and death of Afrasiyab, Rustam, curiously enough, plays no part and thus this great chapter remains purely Iranian. Indeed after his Chinese Kushan and Indian exploits, Rustam and his Sakas disappear from our view until he is brought in again as the hero of two Saka ballads of which the first recounted his fight with Isfendiar and the other describes his end.

Let us now summarise the conclusions reached in this paper. Our comparison of the Shahnameh and the Feng-Shen-Yen-I has been carried out on two lines. We have compared, on the one hand, individual legends with the object of identification. We have also traced the parallel character of the general lines of evolution of the two epics. The main results of our studies can now be presented.

(1) We have found remarkable parallelism both general and detailed between the legends of Chou-Wang and Kai-Kaus, Su-Ta-Ki and Sudabeh, Yin Kiao and Siawash, Sohrab and No-Cha, the bird "Rukh" and (Simurgh). But there is something more to notice than the mere parallelisms however exact; for in some cases we can even see how that parallelism was brought about. It is obvious, for example, that the character of King Kaus in the Shahnameh has been much altered from what it was in the Avesta. In this instance we can actually trace the influence of the Chinese epos upon Persian legend.

(2) Particular attention is also invited to the fact that in the Shahnameh there are two compact blocks of the "Chinese" episodes. The first and earlier block consists of the legends about the seven labours of Rustam (the "Haft Khwan"). If the episodes of Sohrab, Sudabeh and Siawash have Chinese counterparts, so also corresponding to the seven demons and difficulties which Rustam encountered in the "Haft Khwan" are the seven demons of Mei-Shan who were overcome by No-Cha (Sohrab) in the Chinese poem. The second or later block of "Chinese"

episodes in the Shahnameh consists of the legends of Khaquan-I-Chin, Poladwand and Akwan. According to Firdausi all these came from China and I have identified the second with the battling magicians of Po-lu tao and the third with Fei-Lien. The formation of two such extensive blocks of legends, and the references in Shahnameh to the Chinese origin of the demons concerned would by themselves be significant proofs of the influence of the Chinese epos on Iranian legends. On the other hand, and in earlier ages Iranian mythology might well have influenced Chinese legends. But in the later ages one can gather that the influence of matured and important Chinese epics like the Feng-Shen-Yen-I upon the Persian Saga would be important.

(3) Quite apart from these individual and common legends we come to the fact of the parallel development of the general schemes of the two epics. We start with the fact that both epics have as their scheme a great combat between the forces of good and evil, as is indeed avowed by the Chinese poem. After a time when the combat deepens, the losing side in both epics draws upon the help of demoniac beings like Poladwand (the battling magicians of Po-lu-tao) and Akwan (Fei-Lien). Soon in both poems the problem of an epic *impasse* arises *viz.* how to get rid of vast number of combatants on each side. Both poems solve it in the same and very characteristic way—the combat of eleven champions on each side. It is remarkable that no other of the world's epics uses this way bringing about the *denouement*. Needless to say

that the eleven heroes of the good side prevail. But even so the end is not yet; for the heroes of the good side too remain to be disposed of. Consequently in the Shahnameh King Kai-Khusru the leader of the good side is made to ascend to heaven without tasting of the bitterness of death, and most of his paladins die on mountains in trying to follow his example. Obviously the Shahnameh follows a later type of the old legend of Iran, and in the earlier form the paladins also ascended to heaven; for in the Pahlavi writings Tus and Giw among these paladins are also regarded as immortals. Similarly in the Feng-Shen-Yen-I seven leaders of the good side like No-Cha (Sohrab), and his father Li-Tsing (Rustam) go back to the mountains to complete their ascetic practices. Thus both epics terminate alike—the best heroes of each ascending the mountains to fulfil mystic aspirations.

It is to be hoped that these articles might induce some eminent Sinologists and Avesta scholars to develop the topic of Sino-Iranian legends and to bring out its great potentialities. Besides the Feng-Shen-Yen-I the Chinese literature possesses a great wealth of legendary literature. A profound study of that literature side by side with the Shahnameh as well as the Avesta and Pahlavi texts will help us to write adequately a great and new chapter in the history of the world's mythology and legends.

# 5

# SOME CULTS AND LEGENDS OF ANCIENT PERSIA AND CHINA.

To the student of Iranian legends, the cults and beliefs of China in the feudal age appear to be of great interest and value. In the fascinating history of the migration of legends and beliefs the close parallelism of the Iranian legends and Chinese myths of the feudal age will no doubt form a very important chapter. The exchange of cultural influences between two such great and ancient historical nations as the Chinese and the Persians must form also a topic of great interest to the historian. In the introduction to his learned work, "*Le Livre des Esprits et des Immortels*", Harlez has described the various influences which enriched the legends of the feudal age of China—an age which extended many centuries before the Christian era. The Chinese nobility were favourably inclined to cherish the local religions of the races they conquered. Moreover, there was a great deal of intellectual and political intercourse with countries (like Persia) lying to the West of China, and Chinese cults and mythology received a great many accretions. The same learned author has shown (pp. 46–48) how many additions to the Chinese pantheon were made from Indian sources. In a paper read before the Bengal Asiatic Society in the year 1927, I drew attention to the close parallelism of some legends of the Shahnameh and others from

the Chinese feudal age. I showed how close was the resemblance of the exploits of the Iranian heroes Kereşasp and Sohrab to those of the "Divine Archer" Shin-Yi and Li No-Cha. The legends of Sodabeh, Haftwad and Akwan were also shown to bear a striking resemblance to other Chinese myths. In another paper on "the Analogues of the Bahram Yasht" I ventured to suggest the similarity of the bird and tree legends of that Yasht to corresponding belief of China in the feudal age. In the present paper the same task is continued and, among others, the old cults of water and of mountains, as well as that of the Royal Glory (Khvareh) are dealt with. Attention is also drawn to individual legends relating to the heroes Keresasp and Faridun. I admit in all humility that my work in this field is bound to show those defects and imperfections from which an amateur's efforts can never be free. But from what study and thought I have devoted to the field, I can confidently assert that a great harvest awaits accomplished scholars of Iranian and Chinese archæology, when they turn their attention to the scientific and systematic comparison of these two great spheres of beliefs and legends. As said above, it is in the feudal age of China anterior to the second century before Christ that the best material of such comparative study will be found. As one of the great authorities on the subject, Prof. Marcel Granet, has emphasised, it is to the average type or form of the feudal legends that attention has been so far most directed (*cf.* the preface to his work "La Religion des Chinois"). But for obtaining the best results in this comprative study we shall have to take account of provincial

peculiarities of legends and in particular of the legends in Chinese provinces and seigniories bordering on Iran and the land of the Sakas. Such a specialised and detailed study is a necessary preliminary to thorough comparative work. All that is attempted here is to utilise the material furnished in the works of such savants as Granet, de Harlez, de Groot and Father Doré in order to give a few examples of the interaction between the religious and heroic legends of old Iran and ancient China.

### The Cult of the Waters.

We find the Iranian and other heroes described in the Aban Yasht as offering sacrifices to Ardvisura (the goddess of the waters). We note further that they used to offer up to the goddess hundreds of male horses, thousands of oxen and ten thousands of lambs. Sometimes, indeed both parties to a war or battle offer up similar sacrifices to the goddess and we find her favouring one worshipper and rejecting the prayer of the other at her will.

Very similar sacrifices were offered in ancient China especially in the province of Tsin. In that province, more than anywhere else in that empire, vows were made to the spirit of waters and sacrifices were offered up to him.[1] As the Iranian heroes have certain holy rivers and mountains near which they sacrificed to the waters so the Chinese warriors favour the lake of Tsong-ki[2] or the Mount Yang-yu which are places where their predecessors from Yu the Great downwards had sacrificed to the waters.[2] For long periods did the

1 Granet "Danses et Legends de la Chine Ancienne," p. 472.
2 *Ibid*, p. 469, note 4.

goddess protect the lords of Tsin against their foes and help them in their vendettas, and a great number of Chinese heroes of the line claimed and obtained her assistance in their wars.[1] Nor was the worship confined to the princes and friends of Tsin. Their enemies —the princes of Tchou—though at first reluctant to worship the goddess of their foes, at last came into a line and worshipped her, as their ambitions expanded.[2] Similarly in the Aban Yasht enemies like Arejataspa and Kavi Vishtaspa, Tusa and the sons of Vaesaka, Frangrasyan and Husravah strive to gain the favour of Ardvisura. When in China the Tsin, the special worshippers of the god of river, were conquered, the conqueror hastened to offer a sacrifice to the god and thus to placate him.[3] These conquerors had first thought of erecting a mound to celebrate their victory, but on second thought substituted for it a sacrifice to the god of waters whom their rivals had worshipped so long.

### (*a*) THE SACRIFICIAL ANIMALS.

The Iranian heroes sacrificed to Ardvisura horses and oxen and lambs in their thousands. The Chinese also sacrificed to the god of waters horses, oxen and other animals. White horses were preferred, and we read of the Hans throwing a horse and a jade ring into the river.[4] At Lintsin which was another great place for the worship of "the Yellow River", the sacrifices were offered at the times of frost and thaw and consisted of bulls and calves, to which were added in

1 *Ibid*, p. 473, note and p. 480, note 1.
2 *Ibid*. p. 480, note 1.
3 *Ibid*, p. 473, note.
4 Granet, p. 477, note 3.

some places the first fruits of cereals. Bay colts with black manes were also offered to the waters.[1] But it was not considered right or proper to offer to the waters a bull with a completely white head, as it was considered inauspicious.[2] The victims were of course offered up by immersion.[3] Great care was taken in selecting the victims. The priests or invokers of the deity chose the victims[3] beforehand. On the day of the sacrifice the prince with his soldiers went to see if the victims were of the right sort.[4] The sacrifices were on a large scale both in Persia (where victims were offered up in their hundreds and their thousands) and in China where the ceremony cost millions.[5]

### (*b*) APPAREL OF THE SPIRIT OF WATERS.

In Aban Yasht (paras 127–130), Ardvisura Anāhita is decribed as wearing golden earrings, a golden crown with fillets streaming down and garments made of skins of beavers. That reminds us of the Chinese traditions that the spirit of waters demanded from one of the worshippers the present of a cap or crown made of the skin of stags, decorated with red precious stones, the fillets of the crown to be ornamented with other precious stones. As this demand was not complied with, the prayer of the worshipper was rejected with the result that he was defeated and slain in battle.[1] It may be, by analogy, that the Iranian heroes were also expected to provide the apparel mentioned in the Yasht as a part of their offerings.

1 *Ibid*, p. 476, note 6.
2 *Ibid*, p. 473, note 2.
3 *Ibid*, p, 473.
4 *Ibid*, p. 474, note 5,
5 *Ibid*, p, 475 note 1,

### (*c*) PALACE OF THE SPIRIT OF WATERS.

In describing the dwelling or palace of the goddess of waters the Awesta writings give us excellent poetry. Ardvisura Anāhita "has a thousand cells and a thousand channels: the extent of each of these cells, of *each of these channels, is as much as a man can ride in forty days*, riding on a good horse. In *each channel there stands a palace*".[2] These lines of poetic description are exactly those followed by the Chinese classics in describing the goddess of waters. One of her old Chinese names is "Ping-i", which being interpreted "one who spreads forward like a charger or war-horse". This is an analogy similar to that in the Awesta where only the speed of the horse is said to measure the progress of the many channels of the waters. We read again in another Chinese classic that line: "the reservoir of waters is the hidden palace of Ping-i". Here again we have a close analogue of the palace of Ardvisura Anāhita. Similarity of poetic conception as well as of the underlying thought could not well go further.[3] Proceeding further, in Aban Yasht (para 102) wa read of the palaces of Ardvisura Anāhita containing "well-laid, well-scented beds covered with pillows" for her. This is reminiscent of the legends in which the Chinese princes provided brides for the god of waters and also supplied nuptial beds for him.[4] We can also now understand why a jade ring was thrown into the

1 Granet p. 480. note 2. 2 Aban Yasht, para 101.
3 *Cf.* de Harlez "Le Livre des Esprits et des Immortels," pp. 180-181; Doré II. 10,779. 4 Granet, p. 476 note, 4.

river with a sacrifice or when vows were made to the god of waters.[1]

Thus the principality bordering on the Yellow River in China preserved contact with the local god of waters by periodical sacrifices of beautiful girls.[2] The bride of the spirit of waters was dressed in full bridal attire and was placed on a couch which was set afloat on the river. Thousands of persons used to crowd the banks to watch the ceremony.[3]

(*d*) CHARIOT OF THE GODDESS OF WATERS.

Again in the Abān Yasht, the goddess of waters "drives forward on her chariot, holding the reins of the chariot" (para 11). Curiously enough, on a bas-relief at Chan-tong there is depicted a god of waters going out in a car drawn by fishes and escorted by all kinds of aquatic beings bearing arms.[4] It might be added that in China cars were also offered to the goddess of waters in some provinces,[5] together with four bay colts with black manes.

(*e*) PLACES OF SACRIFICE TO THE WATERS.

We note that in old Iran and also in Turan, the sacrifice to Ardvisura was offered either on the banks of a river or lake, or on a mountain. Thus in the Abān Yasht, king Haoshyangha sacrifices to her on the Hara Mountain (sec. 21), Yima on the height of Hukairya (sec. 21) and Kavi Usa on Mount Erezifya (sec. 45). No explanation is given of this apparently strange practice of sacrificing to the goddess of waters

1 Doré II, 10, 780. 2 Grant "La Religion de Chinois". p. 63.
3 *Ibid.* p 476. 4 *Ibid.* p. 481, note 1.
5 *Ibid.* p. 476, note 6.

on the mountains. Chinese heroes also tried to avert floods and droughts by worshipping either on mountains or on the banks of rivers. The reason given is that rivers and mountains are both instrumental in producing rain; consequently the sacrifices necessary to avert a clamity, droughts and flood might be offered either on mountains or on banks of rivers.[1] Hence also the kings off China offered habitually the same sacrifice "Wang" in honour both of mountains and rivers.[2] The sacrifices to mountains and rivers were supposed to keep of diseases also. An oracle attributed to Confucius runs to the effect that "the beneficient influences or spirit of mountains and rivers suffice to regulate the world; the guardians of the earth and of harvests are related to them.[3] Above all mountains and rivers are the terrestrial delegates of high Heaven; and as earthly power is but the shadow of heavenly greatness, the meetings of feudal vassals were held on such sacred spots.[4]

It is very significant that when we want to observe such numerous and detailed resemblances between the Iranian and Chinese cults we have to go far back to the ancient Chinese legends. The resemblance almost disappears when we look to the more recent cults of waters prevalent among the Chinese. Thus neither the cult of Tien-Fei, a goddess worshipped by the navigators to save them from shipwreck,[5] nor the numerous later cults incorporated in Part II Vol. 10 of

1 Granet, p. 467, note 2. 2 *Ibid*, p. 412, note 1 and pp. 560 and 347.
3 *Ibid*, p. 346-7. 4 *Ibid*, p. 65.
5 Doré, Part II, Vol. 11, pp. 914-920.

Doré's great work afford us any parallels of note to the Awesta or Pahlavi legends.

### (*f*) ANIMAL SHAPES ASSUMED BY THE SPIRIT OF WATERS.

So far we have mostly found Chinese parallels to the accounts of the spirit of waters found in the Abān Yasht but, occasionally such parallels are found in other Yashts as well. Thus we all know of the great fight in the Tir Yasht between the white horse (representing the water-god Tishtar) and the black horse Apaosha (representing drought). Incidentally in that Yasht the spirit of waters (Tishtar) assumes the shape of an ox as well. There is a very similar Chinese legend which seems worth drawing attention to. It would appear that a spirit or dragon of waters was lying in the rivers aud lakes of China and was causing numerous floods which were devastating the province of Kiang Si. The dragon slayer Hsu Chen-chun suspected this and prepared to get rid of the destructive water spirit. The latter becoming aware of the steps being taken against him, changed himself into a *yellow ox* and fled. The dragon-slayer at once transformed himself into a *black ox* and started in pursuit. The yellow ox jumped down a well to hide, but the black ox followed suit. The yellow ox jumped out again and assumed the human form but was cornered and made to assume the shape of a lake,[1] and to promise to stop his destructive activities. There is

1 Warner, "Myths and Legends of China", p. 223-24.

another similar legend in which a bull with yellow or golden hair again represents the spirit of the waters.[1]

There has been much speculation about the great aquatic animals described in Bundahish Ch. XIX.[2] The three-legged ass is said there to stand in the midst of the ocean shaking the waters and preserving them from contamination. Darmesteter takes this description as a meteorological myth, while West accounts for the animal as a foreign god tolerated by the Iranian priesthood from political motives.[3] Both suppositions, I venture to submit, are wide of the mark, the legend being a part of the floating mass of legends to be found in Persia, Central Asia and China. Thus China has a legend very similar to the one which we are considering. "In the Eastern sea is found an animal with the appearance of a bull; its body is green and it has no horns; it has also only one leg. When it either enters the water or when it emerges from it there follows a strong wind or rain".[4] This is as poetic an effort to account for storms in the sea as the Iranian legend. The two animals are not very different and their functions are almost identical.

## THE CULT OF THE MOUNTAINS.

In the beginning of Zamyād Yasht we have a description of the world's mountains, and later on, we have an account—mostly historical—of the kingly glory which passed from king to king. The question suggests itself here why an enumeration of mountains should introduce the Yasht dedicated to glory and what were

1 Doré, Part II, Vol. 9, p. 1050. 2 S.B.E., Vol. V, pp. 67-78.
3 S.B.E., V. p. 67, note 4. 4 Granet, II, 509.

the relations of the Royal Glory and of the mountains of the earth. Here we again have no guidance from the commentators.[1] Let us see whether any help is to be obtained from the cult of the mountains and the Chinese idea of Royal Glory.

There were five sacred mountains in China, four of them at the cardinal points of the empire, and the fifth was situated at the centre. The emperor of China sacrificed on the tops of these mountains to Heaven and to the Earth.[2] Among other ceremonies was performed the famous "Fonc" ceremony to earth and to the waters which is supposed to secure the health of the emperor and the happiness of the empire. This sacrifice on the mountains was of particular importance and significance at the time of the foundation of the new dynasty of emperors;[3] and here we note the connection between the Royal Glory and the worship offered up on the sacred mountains. For each dynasty had, according to the Chinese beliefs, its special glory of virtue.[4] As in old Iran, the Royal Glory transferred itself from one great sovereign to another, so in China the "glory" of "regulating virtue" of a dynasty declined towards its end and that of another dynasty came into prominence. This glory or virtue exerted itself both in time and space, for the new and vigorous dynasty *drove the unruly elements of the state over the four holy mountains which formed* the boundaries of the empire.[5] Moreover, homage was paid to the new sovereign by his assembled vassals on the four mountains which had thus both a

1 See S.B.E., Vol. 23, p. 33, note 1. 2 Doré, Part II, Vol. 10, pp. 833–836.
3 Granet, pp. 117 and 525, note 1. 4 Granet 237. 5 Granet pp. 249–251.

political and a religious importance.[1] But there was *a more miraculous way in which the Royal Glory was connected with the mountains.* One of these *cardinal mountains* emitted a cloud or aura of the colour corresponding to that ascribed to the new king. Thus Mount Fou near the Eastern sea emitted a yellow cloud or vapour when Houang-ti became emperor, and a red vapour when Yao was raised to power.[2] Thus in a very material sense the Royal Glory was seen on the mountains. Consequently in China too the Mount Fou near the sea was the seat of the Royal Glory in an important respect just as in Awesta we find Mount Ushidarena was the seat of the glory made by Mazdā.[3] Like Mount Fou, Mount Ushidarena on which the glory reposes was also "surrounded by waters".[4] Then again "regulating virtue or glory" of the Chinese emperors was helpful in expelling the non-Chinese barbarians from China over the borders of the empire. The glory of the Chinese emperors had thus an important effect in promulgating civilization, for it expelled "the barbarians of the four seas" as well as the barbarians of the desert. Just so in Zamyād Yasht, paras 68 and 69, the Glory is the keeper of the Aryan nations and its force is directed towards extinguishing all the non-Aryan nations. Another point of resemblance is that the Royal Glory changes with the dynasties in China and has a rise, a point of culmination and a decline.[5] In the same way in the Zamyād Yasht, paras 92–94, the glory passes from the line of Thraetaona to Frang. rasyan and thence to the line of Husravah and then to

1 *Ibid.* p. 249. 2 *Ibid.* p. 237, note 1. 3 Zamyād Yasht, last para.
4 Zamyād Yasht, para 66. 5 Granet, p. 227.

that of Vishtaspa. It has also a culmination period and a time of disappearance; for we are told that it culminated in Thraetaona when Azidahāka was killed, and in Frangrasyan when Dravau was killed and again in Husravah when Frangrasyan was killed.

We note further the fact that the mountain which was most associated with the Royal Glory in the case of China was situated on the Eastern Sea.[1] This is very interesting in view of the connection in the Awesta between the Royal Khvareh and the watery angel Apam Napāt. Lommel in his introduction to the Zamyad Yasht has expressed the view that "an original connection exists between the thoroughly alien god Apam Napāt and the kingly Khvareh which according to the folklore has its habitation in water".[2] And now we see how the ideas of Royal Khvareh and of the waters were connected in old China also. Here again we see either a reciprocal influence of Chinese and Iranian myths or the potentialities of a common source of inspiration.

It is interesting to observe what a high authority has to say on the subject of the connection between the "Royal Glory" or "Regulating Virtue" and holy mountains. We note in the great work "Les Memoires Historiques de Se ma Tsien",[3] that Mount Fou was a marvellous mountain situated in the Eastern Sea; it emitted a vapour which changed its colour according to the emperor who was called upon to reign. The vapour was red under Yao who ruled by virtue of fire;

1 *Ibid.* Religion, p. 66.

2 Lommel "Die Yashts des Awesta", p. 174. 3 Vol. I, p. 31.

and it was yellow in the time of the emperor Hoang-ti. Hoang-ti ascended the mountain to verify if the magical vapour was of the colour of the earth *i.e.* yellow. It is on occasion of these visits of the mountain that the insignia and title deeds of the barons and lords of the empire were verified.

We note that in the Zamyād Yasht and in the correspoding Chinese legends* we have *the theory of sovereignty as held in old Persia and China.* When the Rayal virtue was perfect then, according to Chinese accounts, the sovereign was the true son of Heaven and was identified in his life with the Order of the Universe. So too, in old Iran, such a king held the Royal Glory made by Mazdā; when however he did sinful or tyrannical acts the Royal Glory left him as it left Yim and Frangrasyan. To proceed further, in China the glory of ancestral kings normally passed to their worthy successors and thus were connected the cults of ancestor worship and of Royal Virtue. So also our Zamyād Yasht is at once a glorification of the successive kings of Persia as well as a hymnology to Royal glory. If the dynasty declines in virtue the Glory goes over to another line; and it is this change of dynasty which the Chinese texts particularly emphasise. Lastly, according to both accounts, the cult of the mountains is an incidental part of the theory of Royal Glory and Virtue. For, the mountains as the chief of holy places are at once the regional and terrestrial delegates of Heaven and the emblems of the exercise of the power of earthly sovereigns, since the meetings of nobility in

* For a summary of these Chinese legends see "La Religion des Chinois", by Granet, pp 55–66.

China at least were held on their neutral ground. The mountains, again, are explicitly connected in the Chinese text with the cardinal points; this point of view is implicit in the Zamyād Yasht which begins with an enumeration of the mountains beginning with those in the East.

While we are on the topic of the Royal Glory (Khvareh) we might note that in the Laws of Manu* we have the mention of a belief very similar to that which was current in old Persia and China; only in the latter countries the belief was developed much further. Manu speaks there of the "tejas" of the king or the royal "lustre" (or glory) which is, as in China, associated with cardinal points. These points which are eight in the case of India are mentioned by Manu by implication through a reference to the eight deities which are the lords of these points.

### LEGENDS ABOUT THE WINDS.

There is a remarkable similarity between the legends of ancient China and Persia as regards the wind in its malevolent aspect. Two examples will suffice to illustrate this thesis.

(1) In the Chinese classics we read that on a certain occasion Fei Lien (the dragon of the wind) and his evil allies raised furious winds and storms in the region of the South. The Emperor Yao deputed the "Heavenly Archer", by name Shen-I, to bring that turbulent spirit to reason. Shen-I, wounded the spirit of the wind by an arrow in the chest; another arrow

* Chap. 7, ss. 4 and 5.

which hit the knee of the wind spirit forced it to surrender and to promise not to repeat its mischievous activities.[1]

So similar is the follwing account of Keresasp's encounter with and victory over the wind as given in the Persian Revayet of Kama Bohra that further commentary is useless. There Keresasp narrates that on one occasion Ahriman and the devils misled the wind into causing great storms; the storms were so severe that trees and even mountains were levelled with the ground. However the wind could not overthrow the hero Keresasp. That warrior seized the malevolent wind, threw it on the ground and made it promise to resume the useful activities which had been assigned to it by Ahura Mazda and the Ameshaspentas.[2]

Again, in the Shahnameh, Rustam kills the demon Akwan who possessed the body of a stag, the stripes of a tiger and the nature of dragon; while its movements were quick as those of the wind. This demon is also a manifestation of the wind-demon, which according to Chinese legends possesses the body of a stag, the size of a leopard and the tail of a serpent; and it can make the wind blow whenever it wishes.[3]

In my essay on "Shahnameh Legends and their Chinese Parallels" I have shown how closely similar the exploits of the Seistan heroes Keresasp and Rustam, were to those of the "Divine Archer" Shen-I. That topic brings us to the legend of the Kamak bird

1 *Cf.* Doré "Recherches sur les Superstitions en Chine", Part II, Vol. 10, pp. 700-701.

2 See Darab Hormazdiyar's Rewayat edited by Dr. J. J. Modi, Vol. I, p. 63.

3 Warner "Myths and Legends of China," p. 205.

mentioned in the Minokhirad,[1] as well as in the Persian Revayets.

### LEGEND OF THE KAMAK BIRD.

In the Revayet of Kama Bohrah, Keresasp boasts of his exploit against the bird Kamak which had darkened the world and created a general drought by intercepting all rain with its wings; Keresasp shot arrows at it for seven days continuously and brought it down after which he crushed its beak with his mace.[2]

This legend, too, is explained by a reference to Chinese mythology, which shows that the bird Kamak is a reference to the maleficient activity of the sun in causing droughts. The Divine Archer Shen-Yi combats the nine false suns which were causing a great drought; the drought was dispelled after the nine false suns had been shot down successively.[3]

### A LEGEND OF KING FAREDUN.

Not only in the case of the great cults but in the matter of individual epiodes of heroes the resemblance between Chinese and Iranian accounts is noteworthy. Thus in the Dinkard[4] we read of a fight between the king Faredun and the demons of Mazendaran in which the king vanquishes them by the instrumentality of the hot and cold wind issuing from his nostrils. "The victorious Faredun pursued them to the foremost upland and his nostrils flamed upon it so that they split it through; from his right nostril is the cutting and sharp

1 Minokhirad, ch. 27, para 50.

2 *Cf.* Darab Hormazdiyar's Revayat, edited by Dr. J. J. Modi, Vol. I, p. 64*

3 *Cf.* Granet "Danses et Legends de la Chine Ancienne," pp. 375 and 377.

4 Book Ix, ch 21, ss. 21-22.

scorching of the ice that has fallen and of the cold of winter; and from his left nostril is the cutting and sharp scorching of the rock that had fallen, which is similarly burning to a fire the size of a house, carrying the dust from the feet of the male ox Barmayun, of the obstructed victor, the mighty Faredun". It is rather difficult to guess from this narration the connection between the breathing exploits of Faredun and the appearance of the "male-ox".

But the Chinese legend of Tcheng-luen presents the matter more clearly and shows that common material was utilised by the Pahlavi legend and the Chinese myth. In the war which led to the establishment of the Chou dynasty, there figured a great warrior named Tcheng-luen who possessed the wonderful capacity of breathing out and ejecting through his nostrils two white columns of light which could scorch whole battalions out of existence. After a long career of victories gained by these means Tcheng-luen met his death at the hands of Kin-ta-cheng who was a "bull-spirit". It is to be noted that all the elements of the Pahlavi and Chinese legends are common including the breathing miracle and the bull spirit.[1]

These legends about heroes, who could kill by their breath, are of great interest and throw light on the history of the practice of the Yoga in Persia and China. In China the Taoist sages attached great importance to respiratory exercises which prepared them for sublime tasks.[2] It was believed that through prolonged retention

1 See Doré "Recherches sur les superstitions en Chine," Part II. Vol. 9, pp. 582-583 and Warner *op cit.* pp. 144-145.

2 *Cf.* Granet, "La Religion de Chinois", p. 151.

of breath they could produce results at a distance from their earthly body. The legend regarding Feridun also shows that similar beliefs were held in Iran at and before the times of the Pahlavi writers.

### KING KAWOOS AND THE EMPEROR CHOU-WANG.

A far more sustained and historically important comparison can be instituted between the incidents of the life of King Kawoos (the Kai-Us of the Pahlavi writings) of Iran as narrated in the Shahnameh and of the career of the Emperor Chou-wang who ruled in China from B.C. 1154 to 1123. The character and reign of Chou-wang are known to us from the pages of the great Chinese epic named Feng-shen-yen-i which has been in part translated for us by the scholarly labours of Wilhelm Grube under the title "Die Metamorphosen der Goetter". But for the untimely death of that great scholar in 1908 we should have possessed a full translation of the great Chinese classic which is a historico-mythological romance of ancient China. What I would emphasise is that the resemblance and comparison which I suggest are not so much between the life of the Emperor Chou-wang and that of King Kawoos as narrated in the Pahlavi writings; the resemblance is confined to the additional episodes about Kawoos supplied to us by the Shahnameh. The inference is obvious; for such a great and well-known popular epic as the "Feng-Shen-Yen-i" must have influenced the epic and ballad-literature of Central Asia; and through it the Chinese epic might well have supplied incidents to the great Persian poet. Here we emerge on the problem of the influence of the great Chinese epic upon the Persian epic. It is for this reason

that the comparison which we are going to institute between the legends of King Kawoos and those relating to the Emperor Chou-wang is of great interest to the students both of Persian literature and legends:

Firdausi narrates that the Eblis took counsel with his demons to darken the life and counsels of King Kawoos and to deprive him of his glory. One of his chief demons thereupen undertook the task of misleading the judgment of King Kawoos and of turning him away from the path of wisdom and rectitude.

According to the Chinese legend the goddess Niu-Kua being offended with the Emperor Chou-wang summoned to her presence the three leading demons and commanded them to go to work so as to bring about the ruin of the emperor. The demons were ordered to enter the palace of the emperor in disguise and to darken the judgment of the king.* The chief of these demons was the noted Fox-demon who soon found an opportunity to carry out his purpose.

King Kawoos was informed that the prince of Hamawaran (a Saka province) had a very beautiful daughter named Sodabeh, and he forthwith sent a nobleman to demand her in marriage for the

The emperor Chou-wang was informed by his minister Fei Chung that the tributary prince Su Hu prossessed a daughter (named Su Ta Ki) of heavenly beauty. The emperor at once asked Su Hu for the

* Grube pp. 7-8.

king. The prince of Hamawaran was most reluctant to marry his daughter to the king of Iran. The insistence of the king in his demand naturally led to a war in which the troops of Iran were worsted at first and imprisoned in the city of "Shaheh" in Hamawaran. In the end however, with the help of Rustam, the prince of Hamawaran was defeated and Sodabeh was given in marriage to King Kawoos. But she became she evil genius of the king and was the source of many troubles which befell him.

Sodabeh, having seen prince Siyawash, fell in love with him and induced King Kawoos to order the prince to go to the royal harem. There Sodabeh made improper advance to him which were repelled by that virtuous prince.

hand of his daughter in marriage. Su Hu however flatly refused this offer* and defied the emperor. The result of this refusal was a war in which the royal troops were at first defeated.† In the end however Su Hu was compelled to give his daughter in marriage to the emperor. While, however, she was being conveyed to the imperial palace the Fox-demons managed to take possession of her and it was through her that the demon managed to mislead the emperor to his ruin.§

Su-Ta-Ki now installed as the empress happened to see prince Po Yi-Kao and fell in love with him. She induced the Emperor Chou-Wang to order Po Yi-Kao to come to the royal harem on the pretext that she wanted to learn

* Grube pp. 13-4.

† *Ibid*, pp. 15-45.

§ *Ibid*, chap. IV.

Vexed by this indifference, Sodabeh accused him of assailing her virtue, with the result that Siyawash left Iran and went over to Turan where he was ultimately murdered.

The Shahnameh mentions another queen of King Kawoos by whom was born prince Siyawash. At the birth of this prince the astrologers prognosticated an unhappy life for him, and hence Kawoos gave over the prince to .Rustam to be brought up abroad and to be educated. On his return to his father's court after an absence of seven years he was, as we have seen, persecuted by his step-mother Sodabeh. In the course of this persecution Sodabeh accused the prince from the prince how to play on the lute; for the prince was an acknowledged master of that instrument. Under pretence of learning the lute from Po Yi-Kao she offered her love to the prince. When he rejected these advances she intrigued against him and brought about his destruction.[1]

All the elements of the stories condensed in the opposite paragraph are found in the Chinese legends but they are arranged in a different order. As it is very interesting to find how the same facts are differently arranged in the two great epics, a brief summary is given here of the Chinese version: Su Ta Ki, once admitted to the palace, plotted against the life of the senior queen Kiang. When the son of the Empress Kiang was born he looked like a lump

1 Grube, Chap. 19.

prince of being the father of certain prematurely born children of a woman about the palace. But King Kawoos learned the true facts with the help of some astrologers. He was going to punish Sodabeh who was however pardoned at the request of Siyawash himself. In Iran, after the death of Siyawash, great honours were paid to his memory and he was held in reverence as the personification of persecuted innocence.

of flesh; and Su Ta Ki took occasion to inform the emperor that a monster had been born in his palace. The emperor ordered the mother to be killed and the child to be cast out of the city. The saintly and immortal Chin-jin, however found the child, foresaw its glorious destiny and reared it up for seven years after which he informed the child of his royal ancestry. On attaining maturity the prince Tai-Sui (for so he was named) avenged the wrongs of his mother on the infamous Su Ta Ki.[1] For his dutiful conduct Tai Sui was canonised in later ages.[1]

The reader might be left to judge from these comparisons how closely the two epics agree in portraying the salient features of the lives of Chou-wang and Kawoos. To me however the most striking comparison is the last one that I have put forward—for there we have the strongest evidence of the use of common material in both epics. All the elements are there—the monstrous birth, the casting out of the child,

1 Grube, chapter VI; de Harlez "Le Livre des esprits et des Immortels" pp. 136-37.

the fact of his being brought up by a stranger, the same period of such tutelage (*i.e.* seven years) the indignation of the child against the vindictive step-mother and finally the canonisation of the child.

But it is not only in the persons of Kawoos and Chou Wang that the colours of the history and mythology of China and Persia have got blended. Another very interesting parallelism can be traced between the two great mystical sovereigns, Kai Khusrau and Hwang Ti. Both were warlike and victorious emperors who gave their names to notable and flourishing periods of national prosperity and who stood for epochs of their countries' unity and greatness. Both of them abdicated at the height of their power and gave their earthly sovereignty in order to reach the heights as spiritual greatness. In the end, both ascended to heaven in their lifetime through their spiritual greatness. Both sovereigns occupy a distinguished place in the histories of mysticism of their respective lands—the Persian being remembered particularly through his speciality of the *Jâm-i-Giti-Nûmai*, and the Chinese monarch being distinguished by his possession of the "pearl of wisdom". But the development of this thesis would unduly enlarge the limits of the present article and must be left for a fuller exposition to some future occasion.

In conclusion, I would draw attention to my object in writing these essays on the parallelisms between the older Chinese and Iranian legends and cults. Scholars like de Groot, de Harlez and W. Grube have drawn attention to the occurrence of Buddhistic elements in

the Chinese cycle of legends. The Chinese have admitted quite a number of Buddhist saints to their pentheons. Indian gods have also been admitted to the Chinese gods though, as de Harlez adds, they are not included in the spirits venerated by the people.[1] The entry of Buddhistic *personalities* into Chinese—for the dogmas had no great success—was due to as exceptional combination of circumstances, *viz.*, the political weakness of China under the pressure of barbarians and the accompaying social disintegration of the time.[2] While the points of contact between Chinese and Indian mythology have been sufficiently attended to, no effort has so far been made to trace the intercourse between Persia and China in cults and legends. And yet in these papers sufficient examples have been furnished to show a wide and close parallelism. If the legends relating to the faith of the great Sakyamuni have forced their entry into China so have also the legends relating to the military heroes of the Saka race.

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1 De Harlez *op. cit.* p. 20.

2 Granet, "La Religion de Chinois", p. 178.

# 6

# THE SRAOSHA YASHT: ITS PLACE IN THE HISTORY OF MYSTICISM.*

In some earlier papers which I read before this Society I have attempted to trace the interrelations and parallelisms of the legends and cults of old Iran and China. In the present paper I shall endeavour to show how closely intertwined are the roots of the venerable mystic systems of the two countries. *Inter alia* it will appear how little ground there is for the belief that the development of Sufism was not influenced by mystic tradition of old Persia. Indeed even in an earlier paper of mine reference was made to one of the eternal symbols of eastern mysticism and there was shown the connection between the Sin-Mereg of the Bahram Yasht, the 'Sien-Ho' of the Taoist symbolism and the *'anqā* of Sufism. The Bahram Yasht and other Yashts contain much plant and bird symbolism which is of great significance in the evolution of mysticism, e.g. the raven, the phœnix, and 'the tree of all remedies'. But the Sraosha Yasht, I submit, stands highest in the old Iranian presentation of mysticism, inasmuch as it deals exclusively and very fully with the problem of problems of mysticism—the nature and aspects of perfect saintship. An attempt will be made here to discuss the interrelations of the mystical aspect

* Issued in the Journal and Proceedings, Asiatic Society of Bengal 2nd November, 1933.

of the Sraosha Yasht with the Taoist system on the one hand and with Sufi doctrines on the other. The analogies of the old Zoroastrian mysticism (as represented in the Sraosha Yasht) to the Taoist teaching will be found to be of great interest; and so will also be the anticipations of Sufism to be met with in that Yasht.

Regarding the exact position occupied by Sraosha in the heavenly host there has been and there is room for much speculation. He is not one of the Archangels, though he is admitted to participation in the Council of the Archangels (cf. Jackson, *The Iranian Religion*, p. 46). Nor is he an angel in the sense of being assigned the guardianship of any of the various elements in the world (*Ib.*, 47). Yet according to the Pahlavi texts he is 'the Sālār-i-dāmān-i-Hormazd' 'the leader of the creation of God'. In the Gathas he is put even side by side with Kshathra, or the Dominion of God. Spiegel has regarded him as a god of light; and Tiele considered him to be the personified abstraction of obedience. Dr. Jackson felicitously reconciles the main points of view by calling Sraosha 'a sort of priest-god, an embodiment of the divine service' (*Ib.*, p. 59). With all deference, I propose to follow this idea of Dr. Jackson a little further and to designate Sraosha as 'the saint-god' or 'as the spirit or genius of saintship'. At any rate we shall adopt this idea as a working hypothesis for our study and see how it will fit in with the descriptions of Sraosha to be found in the Yasht called after his name. But first let us paraphrase a littl the title 'saint-god' which we have

just adopted. In the history of theology, the priest-god or saint-god has always had a double aspect. He is sometimes the god merging into the man and the saint. On other occasions he is the saint (priest) merging into god-head, and that is surely the objective of all systems of mysticism, for no system of mysticism can separate the perfect saintship from god-head. The perfect saint is in a sense also admitted to the Council of Archangels; he is a 'priest-god'; he is also the 'leader of the Divine creation'; and it is the spirit of saintship which in its eternal vigils 'guards the sleeping world'; and the Sraosha Yasht emphasizes all these aspects.

### ABODE AND LOCALITY ASSIGNED TO SRAOSHA.

We shall begin by examining the locality assigned by Zoroastrian mysticism to this 'priest-god' or genius of saintship', and compare this locality with the situation assigned to the highest mystic power or entity in other systems of mysticism. We get our answer from *Yasna* 57 where Sraosha is assigned a victorious house on the highest mountain top—that of the Haraiti Bareza—a house 'which is self-lighted from within and decked with stars on the outside'. The Rashnu Yasht identifies the mountain as the one round which the Sun, Moon, and Stars revolve (*Yt.*, 12.25). Fortunately, through the version of Nairyosang, the traditional view of the position of the Haraiti Bareza is known to us. Nairyosang confidently identifies that mountain with Mount Meru and thus the Avesta and traditions place the location of Sraosha by the Polar axis. The identification of the Haraiti Bareza

and Meru was most probably based upon the belief in the Yashts that the sun and stars revolve round the former and the similar belief held about Mt. Meru in the Indian epics (cf. Hopkyns, *Epic Mythology*, p. 10). It might be added that in the Indian epics Mt. Meru is self-luminous just as the house of Sraosha on the Haraiti Bareza is said to be self-luminous. Again, while in the Avesta the spirit of saintship in the person of Sraosha is located by the polar axis (round which the sun and stars revolve), in the Indian epic the seven Devarshis headed by Vasishtha 'have their rising and setting as stars on Meru in the North' (Hopkyns, *op. cit.*, pp. 181–182). We see thus already a confirmation from comparative mythology of the hypothesis with which we started that of identifying Sraosha with the genius of saintship.

It is here too that we get our first parallel from Taoist conceptions of the genius of saintship; for the Taoists also make the region of the Pole-star the location of such saintly genius. Thus we read in the Taoist tract called the 'Thaishang' that 'there are also the spirit-rulers in the three pairs of the Thai stars of the Northern Bushel' (i.e. the Great Bear) (cf. *S.B.E.*, Vol. 40, p. 236). The idea of the mountain as found in the Haraiti Bereza is also found among the Taoists, for the Thai stars are called a mountain (*S.B.E.*, Vol. 39, p. 167). Indeed the reaching of the summit of saintship by any one is described as having attained the North Pole. Thus Chwang-tse observes that Yu-Chiang got the Tao and 'by it was set on the North Pole' (*S.B.E.*, Vol. 39, p. 245). Again as regards the well-known

'Classic of the Pivot of the Jade', it is observed that its object is to teach men to discipline and refine their spirit, and the name of the classic has been illustrated by referring to the North Star which is called 'the Pivot of the sky revolving in its place and carrying round with it all other heavenly bodies' (cf. *S.B.E.*, Vol. 40, p. 265). Here we have the parallel to the Awesta idea of 'Sun, Moon, and Stars going round the Haraiti Bereza.'

Here also we come upon the first traces of the influence of old Persian mysticism upon the Sufi doctrines. For the idea of the connection of the genius of saintship with the North Pole which we have traced in Sraosha Yasht and in the Taoist texts is also strongly emphasized in the Sufi system. There the great saint of any particular age is called the *Qutb* (the Pole). This conception runs through the whole literature of Sufism. As the Sufi system developed mainly in Iraq and Khorasan which are provinces of Persia it is far more probable that it was influenced by Iranian concepts about the nature of saintship; though of course the influence of Taoism cannot be neglected. In this connection it is to be noted that the Sufi doctrine of saintship was perfected by Hakim Tirmidhi (cf. Nicholson's Translation of the Kashf al-Mahjub, p. 210) and that Tirmidh was situated in Central Asia—the common focus of Iranian and Taoist mysticism.

The above consideration and some others which we shall presently adduce make it almost certain that the Sufi doctrine of Sainthip (ولايت) was formed to a

considerable extent under Iranian and Taoist influences. Let us take another important instance of this form what might be called the numerology of the Sufi doctrine of saintship. Thus we are told in the Kashf al-Mahjub (Nicholson's Translation, pp213–214) that in any age there is a certain number and hierarchy of saints. 'Of those who have power to loose and to bind there are 300 called Akhyar, and forty called Abdal, and seven called Abrar, and three called Nuquaba and one called *Qutb*' (or Pole-star). With this let us compare the numerical configuration of the ancient mystical Chinese hall of Ming-tang which formed the Chinese conception of mystical hierarchy.

S

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | 4 | 9 | 2 |
| E | 3 | 5 | 7 W |
| | 8 | 1 | 6 |

N

We shall see that the numerology here corresponds exactly in every detail to that of the Sufi doctrine of saints. We note in the plan of the Ming-tang that the head or chief pontiff of mysticism represented by the number 'one' is placed in the due north and that number repesents the *Qutb* (or North Pole of the Sufis). The numbers 3 and 7 are ranged on the right and the left of this chief figure. We remember that in the Sufi doctrine of saints these numbers represent the Nuqabā and the Abrār respectively. If we add up the numbers on the

periphery of the figure we get (4+3+8+1+6+7+2+9) =40 which is the number of the Abdāl. If we multiply *inter se* the numbers on each side of the square and add them we get the number of the Akhyār. Thus (4×9×2)+(2×7×6)+(6×1×8)+(4×3×8)=300. There remains the number of Awtāds, viz. 4 which is got by taking the number of the five polar mounts and deducting one for the North Pole which has been counted already. For a good discussion of the palace of Ming-tang I would refer the reader to Marcel Garnet's 'Danses et Legendes de la Chine Ancienne, pp. 116-118.'

Having now envisaged the self-illuminated and star-spangled 'house of Sraosha' as well as the Chinese mystical 'palace of Ming-tang' (as places in which the genius of saintship is enthroned in the North) we have to find a parallel in the Sufi system. This parallel is interesting enough, as we have here a curious contribution in the shape of a tent. The *Qutb* (or Pole) is there in the centre to support the tent while on four sides are the four Awtāds (literally "pegs of the tent").

### SRAOSHA AS WORSHIPPER OF THE TWO PRODUCERS AND PRESERVERS.

From the locality of this genius of saintship we turn to its functions. And the very first function ascribed to Sraosha in his Yasht renders certain the intermingling of the Iranian and Taoist conceptions of saintship. In *Yasna*, 57, I, 2 we read of Sraosha being the first to worship not only the Ahura Mazda and the Amesha Spentas but also '*the two protectors and creators who created all creation*'. That passage has

baffled commentators, and can only make sense if we accept the help of the Taoist doctrine of the Yin and the Yang as the two creators; for obviously we cannot imagine Sraosha as worshipping Ahura Mazda and Ahriman. According to the Taoists all things are produced by the Yin and the Yang reflecting light on each other, covering each other and regulating each other (*S.B.E.*, Vol. 40, p. 128), and so the Yin and Yang constitute 'the two producers'. The Yin and Yang are in fact the two-fold states of the primary ether (*S.B.E.* Vol. 40, p. 47), and the duty and delight of the perfect man is in contemplating the play of the Yin and Yang. It is in this sense only that we have to interpret the particular passage in the Sraosha Yasht for, as the 'priest-god' or 'genius of saintship', it is the task of Sraosha to watch the interplay of controlling forces like the Yin and Yang. The place given to the 'two producers and protectors' in the particular section of the Sraosha Yasht deserves to be studied in order to get any exact idea of their nature. The 'two producers' are placed not only after Ahura Mazda but after the Amesha Spentas, and so they can only be regulative forces of Nature parallel and similar to the Yin and Yang. It is interesting also to note the *parallelism of the order of worship* mentioned in the Sraosha Yasht and that which according to Ssema Tsien was observed by the ancient Emperors of China. The Yasht puts Ahura Mazda first, then introduces the Amesha Spentas and finally brings in the two controlling forces. In the same way the old Emperors of China worshipped first the Lord of Heaven, then the Lords of Earth and War, and after them the lords of the Yang and Yin operations

(see *S.B.E.*, Vol. 39, p. 41, note 1). In this connection it is interesting to note that according to Taoist traditions the Great Bear controls Yin and Yang and we have already noted the connection of Sraosha with the regions of the Polar Star and Great Bear.

On account of the very strict monotheism prevalent in Islam no direct emphasis could be laid by the Sufis upon regulating forces like Yin and Yang. But it was not possible to shut out such speculation entirely, for dualism might almost be said to form a category of religious psychology. The Sufi writers have many doctrines which assume the Yin and Yang theory. Thus Jalaludin Rumi observes (290):

هست سرگردان فلک اندر ز من — همچو مردان گرد مکسب بهر زن
وین زمین کدبانوئیها مي کند — بر ولادات و رضاعش مي تند
پس زمین و چرخ دان ای هوشمند — چون که کار هوشمندان مي کنند
گر نه از هم این دو دلبر مي مزند — پس چرا چون جفت درهم مي خزند

[The sky keeps wandering (revolving) about the earth, just as men go about their occupations for the sake of their wives. Now this earth acts like a wife and exerts itself to bear children and to nurse them. Consequently, oh wise man, you must consider the sky and the earth as intelligent beings. If these two lovers (the sky and the earth) do not enjoy each other, why do they stick to each other like man and wife?]

This is almost a rendering of the view of the Taoist philosophers who regarded heaven and earth as the principles of Yin and Yang. Thus Chang Heng states: 'Heaven has its substance in Yang, therefore it is

round and thereby moves. Earth has its substance in Yin, therefore it is flat and thereby motionless. The moved pours out and fecundates, the unmoved contracts and breeds' (A. Forke, *World-conception of the Chinese*, pp. 176–177). In fact heaven and Earth symbolized Yin and Yang in all Taoist and Confucian literature.

### SRAOSHA AS RELIGIOUS TEACHER.

The Sraosha Yasht puts a great emphasis upon the capacity of the priest-god as a teacher of religion and as a repository of sound theological doctrine. He is the first reciter and student of the five Gathas (*Yasna*, 57, III, 8). He wields as his weapon the prayer Ahuna-Vairya and the Yasna Haptanghaiti and the Fšusŏ Manthra. But besides this religious equipment, as the Sraosha Yasht tells us, the Creator and the Archangels come forward to bear witness to the correctness of the doctrine taught by Sraosha. Obviously if Sraosha was only conceived as an angel it would be irrelevant to emphasize soundness of doctrine. No one ever suspected an angel of heretical leanings or of unsound doctrine. It is only since Sraosha is also a representative of the saint that the Yasht calls on Ahuramazda and the Archangels to guarantee the soundness of his teaching (*Yasna*, 57, X, 24). For, as representing sainthood, Sraosha is a god-man. In fact this special divine testimony claimed for the correctness of the doctrine of Sraosha implies the existence of an esoteric doctrine taught by the representatives of the Sraosha cult which might easily have been questioned by the orthodox clergy of the day and which required for its acceptance by the orthodox public, special and emphatic guarantees.

## HIS 'BARSOM.'

Sraosha was not only the first of Ahura Mazda's creation to offer prayer and to chant the Gathas but to use and spread the *barsom* (*Gray*, p. 106). The nature of the *barsom* used by him deserves attention. It was not the fairly short and ordinary barsom but 'three-stemmed, five-stemmed, seven-stemmed, and nine-stemmed. It was as tall as the knees of a man or even higher' (*Ys.*, 57. 6). This is reminiscent of Chinese beliefs regarding branches of trees which possess out of the way shapes or sizes. Students of the fourth volume of De Groot's admirable work on 'the Religious systems of China' will remember a full description of beliefs about trees and branches which attain special height or shape. Similarly while the *barsom* used ordinarily is about nine inches long only, Sraosha is made to use barsom which is much taller—as high as a man's knee and even bigger. Then we turn to the fact of the large number of branches possessed by the *barsom* used by the holy Sraosha. Obviously, plants possessing so many branches and branches of which the number corresponds to the standard mystical numbers (3, 5, 7, 9) were believed to possess special efficacy; or, as the Chinese would put it, such vegetation would be possessed of much 'soul substance' and 'vital power' (cf. De Groot, *The Religious system of China*, Vol. I, pp. 295–300). That would at least follow from the notions entertained by the Chinese about the mystic influences leading to extraordinary shapes and sizes in vegetation. It need hardly be pointed out that the numbers ascribed to the branches of the barsom mentioned in the Yasna are

specially important in Chinese mysticism. For one thing the numbers symbolize progress in mysticism and the several degrees of mystical attainment. Thus we read in the sixth book of Chwangtse (para, 8) that the inititate was able after *three* days' study to banish all worldly matters from his mind, after studying *seven* days to banish from his mind all thoughts of men and things; and after *nine* days he was able to count his own life as foreign to his true self. In fact the numbers mentioned in the Yasna regarding the *barsom*-branches employed by Sraosha are symbolical of the gradations in the growth of mysticism (*S.B.E.*, 39, 246). It might be added that the odd numbers 1, 3, 5, 7, 9 also represented the heavens (as opposed to tha Earth) in Chinese mystic system (cf. Forke, *Geschichte der alten Chinesischen Philosophie*, p. 179).

### THE CHARIOT OF SRAOSHA AND HIS DAILY PEREGRINATIONS.

We might now suitably bring in a study of the peregrinations of Sraosha over the world and of the corresponding points in Taoist and Sufi doctrine. As Sraosha is connected with the region of the Pole-star, and the constellation goes round the star in twenty-four hours, we can see how the idea of the daily peregrination of Sraosha over the Earth arose. The Taoists have a similar idea of the great Imperial ruler of heaven being in the Pole-star, and the seven rulers in the constellation Great Bear going around it daily. 'Revolving around the pole it descends to rub the four quarters of the spehere and to separate the Yin and the Yang; by so doing it fixes the four seasons, upholds the

equilibrium between the five elements; moves forward the subdivisions of the sphere, and establishes all order in the Universe' (De Groot. *The Religious system of China*, Book I, p. 317). We might also refer to the idea expressed in the book 'Shang Kan Ying Pien' to the effect that the spirit lords of the Pole-star review the happenings on the Earth and report to heaven all the transgressions of mankind.

But while the idea of the daily peregrinations of Sraosha has such interesting parallels in Taoism it is best carried forward in the Sufi tradition. We note that, in the Yasht, Sraosha goes over the Earth in car drawn by four swift steeds. Similarly the Kashf al-Mahjub says: 'It is well known among Sufis that every night the Awtad must go round the whole universe, and if there should be any place on which their eyes have not fallen next day some imperfection will appear in that place; and they must then inform the *Qutb*, in order that he may fix his attention on the weak spot, and that by his blessing the imperfection may be removed' (Nicholson's translation, p. 228). In the Sraosha Yasht four fleet steeds carry Sraosha over the universe, while the Sufi tradition gives him four subordinates for surveying the world. But it is not only vicariously that the *Qutb* (Pole-star) surveys the world; for there are many anecdotes of Sufis having encountered the *Qutb* during his peregrinations on the Earth.

The origin and character of the chariot of Sraosha is also made clearer by a reference to Chinese analogues. For the whole conception of a chariot going round the

world arose from the shape of the constellation Great Bear which can be conceived as that of a car; and in fact in Chinese tradition the Great Bear does form the chariot of the Emperor of Heaven. There is a passage in *Yasna*, 57, XI, 29 of which the meaning is much disputed and on which some light might be thrown by a reference to the Chinese parallels. In the passage in question the movement of Sraosha from India in the East towards the West is described. Here the real reference might be to the succession of the seasons which are governed by the Yin and the Yang. 'When the tail or handle of the Great Bear points to the East (at nightfall) it is spring to all the world and when it points to the west it is autumn.' Prof. Adolf Forke has given us a pretty full description of the alternation of the Yin and Yang during the seasons and according to the points of the compass. 'At the winter solstice, the "Bushel" points direct north, the Yin fluid has reached its climax, and the Yang fluid begins to grow... At the summer solstice the "Bushel" points direct south' (Forke, *The World-conception of the Chinese*, pp. 177–183). Thus the reference is probably to the causation of the seasons by the forces of Yin and Yang or by 'the two producers and preservers'—to quote the language of *Yasna* 57.

So far we have been dealing with the movements of the car of Sraosha as described in the Yasht and their Chinese parallels. But it is even more apt and interesting to find that in ancient China as in old Iran the main function of individual saints as well as of the genius of saintship was to peregrinate the world with

the aim of regulating it and of guarding it against harm. It is obvious that the peregrinations of Sraosha from far off India in the east to the west, as described in the Yasht, were for regulating the world's affairs in his capacity of the commander and guardian of the universe ('Salar-i-daman-i-Hormazd'). On the Taoist side we have copious analogues of this; and, indeed, apart from other Taoist writings, Book XI, Part 2, Section 4 of Chwang-tse by itself supplies numerous examples. Thus the great sage Kwang Chang-tse *who lived at the highest points of the Great Bear* is made to say when asked about the methods of regulation of the universe, 'I will proceed with you to the summit of the Grand Brilliance, where we come to the source of the bright and expanding element. I will enter with you the gate of the Deepest Obscurity, where we come to the source of the dark and repressing. There heaven and earth have their controllers; there the Yin and Yang have their Repositories: (*S.B.E.*, Vol. 39, pp. 297–99). In the same work of Chwang-tse we encounter a very eminent sage significanty called 'the man whose name is not known'. He is questioned about the way in which he manages to govern the world and replies thus: 'I would simply play the part of the Maker of all things. When wearied, I would mount on the bird of the light and empty air, proceed beyond the six cardinal points and wander in the region of non-entity.' (*Ib.*, p. 261). Very similar too to the regulation of the universe by Sraosha is its 'government by the intelligent kings' (*Ib.*, p. 262). These 'intelligent kings' were no doubt the great Taoist saints. The same work

speaks of Lich-tse, a master of the *Tao* os 'one who mounts on the ether of heaven and earth in its normal operation and driving along the six elemental energies of the *changing seasons*, thus enjoying himself in the illimitable' (*Ib.*, p. 169). These Taoist parallels might usefully suggest to us that the four steeds of Sraosha were meant also to represent the energies of the four seasons.

### SRAOSHA AS THE PROTECTOR OF SAINTS.

Let us now turn to another important function of Sraosha. In *Yasna*, 57, IV, 10 Sraosha is described as constituting a strong house for teh 'Drighaoshcha Drivyaoscha'—translated often as "poor men and poor women." But looking to the veneration with which the word درویش (Darwish) has been looked upon in Persia and Central Asia for countless ages we might translate it as 'Saints, male and female'. And here there is no lack of parallel Taoist texts for the verse which we are examining and which emphasizes the fact that Sraosha builds a mighty house for the saints especially after sunset. Thus we read in Chwang-sze that 'the perfect men of old trod the path of benevolence as a path which they borrowed for the occasion, and *dwelt in Righteousness as in a lodging which they used for a night*' (*S.B.E.*, Vol. 39, p. 356) and this old but poetical idea was ever present with the great Sufis. Thus Sultan Abu Said Abul-Khair, the eminent Sufi, observes:

شب خیز که عاشقان به شب راز کنند  گرد درو بام دوست پرواز کنند
هر در که بود وقت شب در بندند  الّا در دوست را که شب باز کنند

(Awake at night for the saints study secrets of mysticism at that time and fly about the gates and roof of their Friend. At night every other gate is closed except that of the Almighty Friend which is then opened.)

So the concepts of the Sufis are not so far from those of the Taoists and of Sraosha Yasht after all and yet I sometimes suspect that the fourth 'Karda' of *Yasna*, 57, can be made to bear a more realistic meaning and refer to the wandering 'dervishes' who have for untold ages traversed Central Asia and required strong lodges (خانقاه) for shelter at night. When we remember for how many centuries the Buddhist monks and nuns, the Taoist monks as well as the Fakirs whom the Chinese called 'hill-sages' and 'western men' have gone about Central Asia it requires no great stretch of imagination to recall a set of Iranian Dervishes treading the same paths—many of them belonging to the cult of Sraosha.

### THE YOUTHFULNESS OF SRAOSHA.

Among the attributes of Sraosha an important place is given in the Yasht to his youthfulness. *Yasna*, 57, VI, 13 has a magnificent and poetical description of the youthful nature of Sraosha. There in no such emphasis laid in any other Yasht about the youth of angels. Here again we see the eminently mystical and human character of the Sraosha Yasht, for it is one important aim of mystical practices to maintain perennial youth. Whether he is a Taoist or Yogi or Sufi or Rosicrucian, the mystic is always

aiming at and obtaining the secret of youth. Perhaps, however, no system worked so persistently for this object as Taoism. As Dr. Legge observes 'Lao insists on the Tao as conducive to long life, and in Chwang-tse we have references to it as a discipline of longevity. My own opinion is that the methods of the Tao were first cultivated for the sake of longevity'..... In the paragraph that follows there appears a Nu Yu, who is addressed by anotber Taoist in these words, 'You are old, Sir, while your complexion is that of a child; how is it so?' And the reply is, 'I became acquainted with the Tao' (*S.B.E.*, Vol. 39, p. 24).

As the heir of the old Iranian and, to some extent, of Taoist tradition Sufism also claimed powers and methods of juvenation. And the great mystic Jalaluddin Rumi has expressed this clearly and forcibly:

دایما تر و جوانیم و لطیف — تازه و شیرین و خندان و ظریف
پیش ما صد سال و یکساعت و یکیست — که دراز و کوته از ما منفکی است
چون نباشد روز و شب با ماه و سال — کی بود سیری و پیری و ملال

(We, i.e., the Saints, are always fresh and young, sweet and smiling. To us a hundred years are no more than an hour since 'long' and 'short' are ideas quite remote from us. Since then with us there are no night and day or months and years how can we become tired, old or worn out?)

### TRACES OF ESOTERIC DOCTRINE IN THE YAHST.

We have seen earlier that the Yasht claims special divine sanction and guarantee for the correctness of the

doctrines of the Sraosha cult—a course for which there is no parallel in any of the other Yashtas (*Yasna*, 57, X, 24). It was also noted that the history of mysticism showed numerous instances of such claims. Thus, while some eminent Sufis avowed and gloried in their heterodoxy (کفر) others made energetic efforts to force their Sufi doctrine within the framework of orthodoxy (شریعت). Similar efforts we note were made in Europe by mystic like Swedenborg. We now proceed to inquire whether the Sraosha Yasht exhibits any doctrines which might arouse doubts among the orthodox and which would only be accepted under special divine sanction; and there seems to be a fair number of such views. For one thing the very text which begins *Yasna* 57 must have become a controversial matter—for there Sraosha is shown as worshipping Ahura Mazda, the Amesha Spentas and the 'two producers and preservers' (corresponding to the Taoist Yin and Yang). This implied a special teaching about cosmogony unknown to other cults of Iran. In fact here we have the beginnings of that give-and-take between old Iran and China which eminent scholars have been studying recently. Nor was this all. The doctrines of the Sraosha Yasht show a certain tendency-worthy again of a lofty mysticism—of confining worship to Ahura Mazda. His attributes (the Amesha Spentas) and the 'two producers and protectors' and of neglecting by implication all angelology and mythology. We note also that the texts which Sraosha recites and employs

are confined to the Gathas, the Ahuna-Vairya and the Yasna Haptanghaiti; none of the litanies to the minor angels are mentioned. In fact we have here a reversion to the Gathic type of mysticism on the one hand, and we have great parallelism with the Taoist mysticism on the other. As one of the oldest works on Taoism put it, 'the saint forms a trinity along with the heavens and the earth; he stands on an equal footing with the great spirits and with their help regulates the administration of the world' (Forke, *op. cit.*, p. 178). So Sraosha—the spirit of saintship—is the equal of archangels and he is the guardian angel of the world. Lastly, attention has been drawn to the fact that the Sraosha Yasht has a system of mystic numbers allied to the old Chinese system.

### SRAOSHA AND WEN-TCHONG.

In the above discussion we have noticed the close analogy between the different attributes and functions of Sraosha and those of the loftiest saintship of Taoism and Sufism. We can now go a little further and investigate a curiosity of comparative mythology by studying and comparing the functions of Sraosha and the Taoist deity Wen-tchong (otherwise called Lei-tson). The reader will find a good summary of the functions and character of Wen-tchong in Father Doré's '*Superstitions en Chine*', Part II, Vol. 10, pp. 682–685, or he might turn up Grube's translation of Feng-Shen-Yen-I for a similar account. We note first that Wen-tchong

is like Sraosha 'the great preceptor'. He is also identified with the Great Bear and we have seen the close connection of Sraosha (with his seat on Haraiti Bereza) with the region of the Pole-star. Sraosha, as we know, carries 'the club uplifted' as his weapon (*Yt.*, 11, 12). Correspondingly, Wen-tchong has a white hatchet which he bears erect when marching to spiritual combats. Further, it is added that Wen-tchong keeps traversing the world seated on an animal which can go thousands of miles in the twinkling of an eye. This agrees very well with Sraosha's peregrinations of the earth on his four quick coursers. Finally, Sraosha is the protector of the houses of the faithful (*Yt.*, 11, 20); and even now verses from the Yasht are inscribed on the goods of some Parsi houses. That reminds us that the name of Wen-tchong (viz. Lei-tson) is written in most Chinese houses on the lintels of doors as a pressing talisman. I believe, I am right in saying that the similarity of Sraosha to Wen-tchong forms a curiosity of comparative mythology, and I have pleasure in bringing it to the notice of Iranists and Sinologs respectfully and in requesting them to devote further study to it.

### THE SPIRIT AND ATMOSPHERE OF THE YASHT.

We have seen that the Yasht embodies the ideals and aspirations of the mystics of old Iran, and its general atmosphere of the Yasht corresponds to this suggestion. True, the angel Sraosha is described as a

warrior but he smites great demons in order to protect a few humble saints and travellers. The angelic pomp and circumstance, the personifications of Nature's might in which other Yashts are so rich is eminently wanting in this Yasht. The entire human personnel of this Yasht consists of a few saints and travellers whom Sraosha protects, besides the inmates ot the houses where he has been honoured and where his faithful disciples have been well-received. Of royal or heroic power and glory we hear nothing. For the angel of saintship can suitably hold communion, on the one hand, with the archangels, and on the other hand with meek and lowly saints snd those who receive them in their houses; but he has little enough to do with earthly kings or warriors. The *personnel* and atmosphere of the Yasht thus correspond with what we would expect if Sraosha was, as we have suggested, the genius of saintship.

It is also not worthy that it is in this particular Yasht that we meet with the closest analogies and parallelisms with the ideas and imagery of the Gospels. When we read (*Yt.*, 11, 20) of 'the houses protected by Sraosha, where the holy Sraosha is dear and friendly treated and satisfied as well as the faithful man' (or the saint), we are irresistibly reminded of *Matthew*, X, 40-41 and 13: 'He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me'. 'And if the house be worthy let your peace come upon it'. Again, corresponding to the claim of Jesus to be

'the good shepherd' we have in the Sraosha Yasht an apothesis of the shepherd's dog (*Yt.*, 11, 7) where the dog is compared with the angel. 'And therefore we take round us the holy-natured Sraosha, the holy, the friend-smiter, as one does with shepherd's dogs.' I claim confidently that in no piece of literature whether sacred or profane has man's faithful canine friend received such an apotheosis or even justice as in this Yasht. For after all even the good shepherd can do little to save his flock from the wolf without the powerful assistance of his dog. When again we hear Sraosha described as 'the incarnate Word' (*Yt.*, 11, 18), we come across another striking analogy with the 'saint-god' described in the Gospels. But, to conclude, do not these striking parallels found in the Yasht with the spirit and even the phraseology of the Gospels show that the subject of both compositions is the ideal of saintship on Earth—The 'Saint-god' in fact?

# 7

# THE HOUSE OF GOTARZES: A CHAPTER OF PARTHIAN HISTORY IN THE SHAHNAMEH*

In his great epic when touching all too briefly on the Parthian age, Firdausi tells us with a noble ingenuousness that he knew nothing of the history of the Parthians except a few royal names:

ـ ازیشان بجز نام نشنیـــده ام  نه در نامهٔ خسروان دیده ام

(I have heard but their names; and have not read of them in the 'book of Kings'). Nevertheless eminent historians are of opinion that a good deal of Parthian history can be traced in the Shahnameh mixed up with the annals of the Kaiyānian dynasty. It was impossible indeed to keep out the glorious deeds of five centuries of Parthian history from the national annals, in spite of the great reluctance of the Sassanide editors and collectors of the country's traditions to chronicle the greatness of their hated predecessors. The result has been that we find Parthian kings and princes like Gudarz (Gotarzes), Gew and Karen introduced into the national epic as Knights of the round table of King Kaikhusrau and his predecessors, and that we get occasional glimpses of Parthian history and descriptions of individual Parthian exploits in the midst of what is the general history of quite other ages and dynasties.

* Issued in the Journal and Proceedings, Asiatic Society of Bengal 31st October, 1933.

Eminent Iranian scholars like Marquardt, Noldeke and Herzfeld have hinted that it is possible to trace some Parthian history in the great epic of Firdausi, and have gone further so far as to say that Gudarz (one of the heroes of the Shahnameh) represents the Parthian King Gotarzes I (cf. Herzfeld, *Am Tor Von Asien*, pp. 46-47).

Nevertheless there has been no detailed study of the topic, nor has it been noticed that there is one 'chapter' of the Shahnameh, in which we find *a continuous narration of some decades of Parthian history*. That is the portion of the epic beginning with the murder of prince Farud and ending with the great fights of Iranians at Ladan and Hamawan and with Kamus the Kushanian, and others. It will be shown by a comparison of that part of the Shahnameh with narrations of Parthian history by classical writers, like Justin and Tacitus, that here at least Firdausi is following steadily and continuously the lines of actual Parthian history in the proper chronological sequence and order. Fortunately the incidents which stand out in Firdausi's narrative are some of the same that are described by Tacitus in this connection, and needless to say it is of supreme literary interest to compare the treatment of the same epic event by such masters as Tacitus and Firdausi. But apart from such striking comparisons I rest my case on the chronological parallelism between the events narrated in the epic and the facts of Parthian history.

### THE CENTRAL THEME OF THIS PORTION OF THE SHAHNAMEH.

I invite attention to the fact that a single thread of narration runs through the whole portion of the

Shahnameh which we are considering—and that central theme is the success and glorification of the house of Gudarz (Gotarzes, the Parthian king). Indeed I venture to suggest that this whole portion of the Persian epic is based upon the number of ballads celebrating the exploits of Gudarz (Gotarzes) and his family. The narration opens with the murder of the young and gifted prince Farud; and the consequences of that tragedy are found to be immediately favourable to the hero Gudarz (Gotrazes) who is raised to the chief command in the army, as a consequence.

سبک طوس را باز گردان ز جای ز فرمان مگر دو مزن هیچ رای

سر افراز گو در ازان انجمن بهـــر کار باشد ترا رای زن ۰

(Quickly send back Tusa; the illustrious Gudarz should be thy guide in all operations.)

We might note further that while Gudarz thus gains largely by the murder of Farud, an attempt is made in the account to attribute the chief guilt of the murder to other noble men. Then follows the struggle between the son and grandson of Gudarz (Gotarzes) with Palashan, and here again the house of Gudarz triumphs. The third phase is the fight with Tazhav; and there also the whole credit is given to Bezan (a relation of Gudarz), who not only puts Tazhav to flight but deprives him of his beautiful wife Ispanoe. The bias on the side of Gudarz can be traced much further. For indeed all other Iranian heroes like Tusa and Fariburz are made to do nothing but commit blunders, from the consequences of which they are saved by the intervention either of Gudarz or of some relation.

of his. Thus when Fariburz, the commander-in-chief, is running away from the battle, it is Gudarz and his party who save the situation as well as the national standard.

فریبـــرز باید کزان قلبـــگاه  گریزان بپـــوید ز قلب سپاه
یکایک بدشمن سپردند جای  ز گردان ایران بند کس بپای
چو گودرز کشواد از قلبـــگاه  درفش فریبـــرز کاوس شاه
ندید ویلان سپـــه را ندید  بکردار آتش دلش بر دمیـــد
به بیژن چنین گفت گودرز پیر  کز ایدر برو تیز با گز و تیر
بسوی فریبر ز برکش عنان  بپیش من آراختـــهٔ گاویان

[ Fariburz fled from the centre, and so did the Persians who left the field to the enemy. But when Gudarz saw this his heart was fired with rage; and the old man told Bezan to ride towards Fariburz and to bring away from him the standard of Gaweh. ]

Nor is it enough that commanders like Tusa and Fariburz are made to run away while Gotarzes and his offspring are left to redeem the day. The hero Gustaham is rescued from certain death by one of the house of Gotarzes more than once. Then again in the formation of the line of battle it is the house of Gotarzes to which the right wing is assigned.

On these grounds it is submitted in this present paper that this portion of the Shahnameh—or rather of its predecessor the Bastannameh—was based upon ballads recounting the deeds of the house of Gotarzes (Gudarz) which must have been very popular in Northern Persia and especially in Hyrcania. Indeed as late as the time of Firdausi we find such ballads

relating to the house of Gotarzes still popularly sung and waiting to be taken up into histories. For the poets tell us that his account of the loves of Bezan (a grandson of Gotarzes) and Manizeh was based on a ballad sung to him by a lady of his own family. In earlier times such ballads narrating the exploits of the heroes of the line of Gotarzes must naturally have been much more common. For the topic of the house of Gotarzes was indeed one well-suited for the objects of the bard and the minstrel. The career of Gotarzes himself was such as to appeal to the minstrel and to the poet of Fortune's vicissitudes; of these he had the most ample share—now ruling over all Iran and playing the part of a champion of Iranian patriotism against pretenders supported by Rome; at other times flying to remote Hyrcania and execrated as a tyrant. As a warrior he was great and Tacitus does justice at once to his 'terrible courage' (*Annals*, Book XII, 14) and to the skill with which he turned tables on his all but victorious foe Carenes by attacking him in the rear. He was obviously proud of his martial character, for on his coins he describes himself not only as King of Kings of the Arians but as 'Kalymenos' (champion and military factotum) of Artabanos. At least twice in his career he showed himself capable of highly chivalrous conduct—first when he divulged to his rival Vardanes I, a plot against the latter's life and again when he spared the life of his defeated rival Meherdates. He is also one of the few Parthian kings whose attachment to, and practice of the national religion has been placed on record by history. Thus Tacitus speaks of the 'special worship of Hercules' by Gotarzes. By

this deity is no doubt intended the angel Verethraghna who was often described in Greek records as Hercules Artagnes (cf. Tacitus, *Annals*, Book XII, 13).

It might be suggested further that these ballads can still be traced in their outlines in the epic of Firdausi. There is, to start with, the one relating to the tragedy of Kalat (i.e., the murder of Vardanes of Farud). That is followed by—though in noway connected with—the ballad about the fight between Bezan and Palashan which, as we shall attempt to show later, refers to the struggle between the successors of Gotarzes with Vologeses I, and which very likely led to the separation of Hyrcania from Parthia. Then follows another poem, integral in itself, which celebrates Bezan's exploits against Tazhav culminating in the capture of the latter's beautiful wife. So far there have been only descriptions of successful wars. But tragedy—almost unrelieved tragedy, one might say, supervenes. There, for example, is the pretty ballad about the death of the very young boy Bahram (of the family Gotarzes) who performs great exploits, but who loses his life ultimately in attempting to gratify a boyish whim, when he returned to look for a lost favourite whip on the field of battle. Lastly, the ballads turn to the disappearance of the house of Gotarzes when the heroes fell with their faces to the foe on the well-stricken fields of Poshan, Ladan, and Hamawan. In some of the most beautifully tragic and pathetic verses of the great epic we seem to hear the echoes of the wild accents of grief in the ballads which must have stirred the essentially nomadic and warlike

heart of Parthia for centuries. There is room here only to mention a few instances of these accents of passionate grief. Thus,

همي کوه از خون گودرزیان  برزنار خونین ببندد میان

(Such are the streams of blood of the descendants of Gotarzes descending the sides of the mountains, that they are like girdles tied to the mountain-side.)

در کاخ گودرز کشوادگان  تهی شد ز گردان و ازادگان
ستاره بر ایشان بنالد همي  بپالیز گلبن بنالد همي

(The gate of Gudarz stands emptied of its heroes and warriors. Even the stars shed tears on them while in the gardens the roses refuse to bloom.)

The proofs of the hero worship with which Gotarzes and his family were regarded by the Parthians are not confined to the portion of the Shahnameh under our notice. (I say advisedly 'by the Parthians'—since the Sassanides were most unlikely to go out of their way to do such honour to a Parthian prince.) For, later in course of the epic, we find that the exploits which, according to the Awesta, were performed by the warrior Tusa, are transferred to Gotarzes (Gudarz). Thus in verse 53 of the Aban Yasht we find the glory of vanquishing the swift sons of Vaisaka (i.e. the warriors Piran and Haman) ascribed to the warrior Tusa. But that honour is given in the Shahnameh to Gudarz (Gotarzes) and his son Gew. This sort of transfer, in the face even of religious scriptures, shows how strong the current of the national sentiment of Parthian ran in favour of the house of Gotarzes. One

wonders whether this attributing of the exploit of Tusa to Gotarzes was due to a confusion between the Turanian name Vaisaka with the very similar name Vasaces which was borne by the commander of cavalry in the army of Vologeses I? This Vasaces is mentioned in Tacitus, *Annals*, Book XV, S. 14; and of course there was every probablity of an encounter between him and Gotarzes.

### GUDARZ (GOTARZES).

Since our hypothesis is that the portion of the Shahnameh which we are about to study embodies a series of ballads glorifying Gotarzes and his dynasty, we shall begin by comparing the main features of the career of Gudarz as described by the Shahnameh with what we know of the history of Gotarzes. We shall find that in spite of the mingling up of the Gotarzes ballads with the saga of the round table of Kaikhusrau, the great epic fairly reproduces the leading features of of the life of the historical hero. Thus in the epic Gudarz is one of the leading heroes at the court of King Khusrau who had been brought back to ascend the throne from the wilds of Turan (Scythia). Similarly in history Gotarzes figures as the 'Kalymenos' (گرمان) or chief warrior of King Artabanus III. It is well-known that this Artabanus III had been compelled to retire to the wilds of Hyrcania; but later with the help of an army of the Dahae and Sakae he came back and reascended the throne of Iran. So in the epic, Kaikhusrau is brought to Iran by Gew, the son of Gudarz. In history it is 'Gotarzes Geopothros' who is the right hand man of Artabanus III. Further as

we shall see, in the epic it is Gudarz who is raised to the command of the Iranian army on the murder of Farud; while as a historical fact Gotarzes was raised to throne on the murder of Vardanes. We do not know whether Gotarzes had any hand in the formation of the conspiracy which led to the murder of Vardanes; but such a thing was not improbable; and the Shahnameh might be voicing the contemporary belief or suspicion when it records that while quite a number of nobles assailed the young King Farud (Vardanes), it was Bizan and Raham (both related to Gudarz) who actually killed him. History tells us indeed that Gotarzes had at the time of this murder retired to Hyrcania; but that would not prevent some of his partisans and relations from taking a hand in the tragedy at Kalat, especially as Gotarzes was sure to benefit by it.

## FARUD AND VARDANES.

With this introduction we enter on somewhat detailed study of the narratives of the Shahnameh with which we are directly concerned, and first we must take up the episode of Farud. The epic makes Farud a half-brother of king Kaikhusrau. When the latter sent an army against Turan, he had given express orders that the army shold avoid the famous fortress Kalat in the north-west of Persia, which was occupied by Farud. But the general of the army, iu a rebellious spirit, approaches the fortress. This leads to a struggle with Farud who is killed by the grandson of Gudarz, but only after his arrows have accounted for a number of Iranian heroes. When Kaikhusrau hears of this tragedy of Kalat he supersedes the general and ultimately

appoints Gudarz in his place (Werner III, 83). The one person who benefits by the murder of Farud is Gudarz. Thus we read in the Shahnameh :

سبک طوس را باز گردان ز جای ز فرمان مگر دو مزن هیچ رای
سر افراز گودرز ازان انجمن بهر کار باشد ترا رای زن
ترا پیشرو گیو باشد بجنگ که بافر و بر زاست و جنگ پلنگ

(King Kaikhusrau's orders were to send back the general Tusa in disgrace; at the same time Gudarz is is to be made the chief adviser in all operations, while his son Gew is to lead the van of the army.)

A comparison of the Farud of the epic and Vardanes of history shows close and striking parallel. Both are young and warlike princes murdered in the prime of life. In character they were alike, for Vardanes aroused his nobles to conspiracy by his autocratic behaviour (Gutschmidt), while Farud too is represented as hot tempered and possessing a biting tongue. It is particularly interesting to note that the place where the tragedy was enacted was the same both according to the epic and the history. Farud is killed at Kalat in North-Western Persia; while Vardanes, when we last hear of him before his assassination, is conquering the Dahae and other 'intermediate tribes' in the north-west of Persia right up to the river Sind which Gutschmidt conjectures to be the Tejend (G. 126; Tacitus, *Annals*, XI, 10). Now we know from other sources that in these regions the most important movement of the day was the advance of the Tokharians in their victorious career (Gutschmidt, *op. cit.*, p. 133). It is a very significant detail that while according to history

Vardanes was advancing in the lands of races like the Dahae and Tokharians, Firdausi expressly calls the auxiliary of Farud, by the name of Tokhar. When we remember that Tokhar is not a man's name but only the name of a tribe, we can see that this is a detail very important for the identification of the prince, which tradition has luckily preserved for us. From the narrative in the Shahnameh we infer that when Vardanes (Farud) was assassinated, it was his Tokharian auxiliaries alone who stood by him—presumably the Persian nobles being all in the conspiracy against the prince (Tacitus, *Annals*, Book XI, 10); for while the epic supplies us with numerous names of the assailants of the prince, the only person who assisted him is called Tokhar. Both princes again were assassinated by disobedient Iranian nobles. It might also be added that while Farud was the half-brother of King Kaikhusrau, the Vardanes of history was the half-brother of King Gotarzes. For as Gutschmidt observes, while Vardanes was the son of Artabanus III, Gotarzes was in a sense an adopted son of the latter. Surely so many coincidences could not be fortuitous; hence we can have no hesitation in identifying Farud with Vardanes. At any rate it cannot be seriously argued that there existed two Persian princes with very similar names indeed, who were both assassinated in their early youth by rebellious nobles; that both were killed in very nearly the same locality, both being supported by Tokharian auxiliaries against their Iranian assailants.

The murder of such a prince as Vardanes must have created a profound and indelible impression in

Iran and it is no matter for surprise that the fact was registered alike by history, tradition, and poetry. The young prince of great promise who had won great victories alike in the West over Seleucia, and over Gotarzes and who had carried Parthian power to its greatest pitch in the North and West (Gutschmidt 124) was suddenly removed. The event must have attracted great attention in the countries of the West as well; for when the philosopher Philostratus was in want of a hero for his new Cyropaedia, a century and a half later, he selected Phraotes or Vardanes to play that illustrious part. The analogy of the name Phraotes to the epic name of Farud is so great as to amount to an identification. It is an interesting speculation to account for the fact that Philostratus mentions and describes our hero Farud under two closely related and similar names—as Vardanes and again as Phraotes. In fact Philostratus (who knew Parthia and its history very well) actually makes Vardanes and Phraotes (which is obviously the same name as Farud) contemporary rulers—the former of Parthia and the latter of what we might call Parthian India. I might be allowed to suggest that the explanation of this procedure was the old hatred of the Roman for his age-long rival—the Parthian; and I emphasize the fact that the Emperor Caracalla, in whose time Philostratus was writing his historical romance, was particularly hostile to the Parthians and indeed deemed it perfectly legitimate to employ the most 'detestable treachery' (Sykes I, 386) in order to gain an advantage over them. Consequently, though a courtly philosopher like Philostratus would

have liked to write a new Cyropaedia for the benefit of Caracalla, yet it would have naturally seemed to him most impolitic to select a well-known King of Parthia to play the part of the new Cyrus. Very discreetly and prudently then this part was assigned to a fictitious 'double' of the Parthian king who was supposed to be a King of India. Nor was there anything violent in this supposition; for about this period we witness the restoration of the Persian hegemony over nearer Asia and as far as the valley of the Indus (Huart 109). Indeed to this restoration of the Parthian hegemony the victories of Vardanes in Central Asia, which Tacitus refers to, must have contributed materially. For we learn from the great Roman historian that Vardanes (Farud) won tribute from peoples from whom no Arsacid had won it before, and that he snbdued the intermediate tribes as far as the river Sindes.

### PALASHAN AND VOLOGESES I AND II.

Classical historians do not supply us with the names of the sons or other descendants of Gotarzes. But the authority of the Shahnameh which assigns to him 'seventy splendid sons' is reinforced by other indications of a decisive character. Thus the historian Tabari mentions one who corresponds to Gew (Persian) and Wew (in Pahlavi). A grandson Bezan (Pehlevi Wezan) is mentioned by Firdausi, Tabari and many other Eastern historians. If I might be permitted a conjecture, the word Bezan was in its origin the name of a dynasty or family, since it only signifies 'the son of Gew (or Wew)'. Indeed, it is only a Pahlavi translation

of the name by which Gotarzes in his inscription describes himself—'Geopothros (=the son of Gew)'.

As mentioned above, in classical history there is no express mention of the exploits of these descendants of Gotarzes. But it is significant that all through the reign of Vologeses I (who came to the throne soon after the death of Gotarzes), Hyrcania was trying to break away and to form an independent state and that it succeeded at last in achieving its object, with the result that after a decade's struggle, Vologeses I had to acknowledge its independence by a treaty. We then call to mind that Hyrcania was in a sense identified with Gotarzes and his family, since both he and his grandfather used it as a place of refuge whenever they were defeated and lost their hold over the rest of Iran. Indeed Rawlinson infers that by a treaty between Gotarzes and Vardanes I, Hyrcania has been assigned to the former and that it was on that condition that the former agreed to relinqish his claims to the Parthian crown in favour of the latter. Putting these facts together one can safely infer that the rebellion in Hyrcania represented a civil war between the family of Gotarzes (which had always represented Hyrcania) on the one hand and the house of Vologeses I on the other. This inference is corroborated by the narrative in the Shahnameh which records the struggle between Bezan and Palashan. As we have seen Bezan (in Pahlavi Wezan) was, at least to begin with, a generic name for the family of Gotarzes. The name Palashan, on the other hand, is the Persian form of the Parthian name Walagash (Vologeses) (cf. Justi's *Iranisches Namenbuch*, pp.

240 and 344). The plural form Palashan is significant, because several sovereigns of the name Volagases followed each other. Thus we find that the Shahnameh and classical history corroborate each other and shed supplementary light on events. In the main the Shahnameh is found to be correct, though it symbolizes a ten years' civil war between the houses of Gotarzes and Vologeses I by a single combat in the desert and ends it equally summarily by the death of Palashan. For according to most authorities Vologeses I had a long career and died a natural death. But there are other authorities who believe that the long reign ascribed generally to Vologeses I covers two shorter royal careers—one of which might easily have terminated fatally in the course of long and bitter civil war.

### ISPANOE AND ZENOBIA.

The next Parthian episode in the Shahnameh is the defeat of Tazhav by Bezan. The latter pursues his opponent Tazhav who made a noble effort to take away and save his wife Ispanoe with him on his horse. After a gallant effort, however, he was compelled by circumstances to leave his wife to her fate. I beg leave to quote the episode of the flight of Tazhav as translated from the Shahnameh by the Warners:

> He urged his steed toward the castle-gate,
> Pursued thus by Bizhan at lightning speed,
> And, when he heard the castle, Ispanwi
> Came wailing with her face suffused with tears,
> And cried out loudly to him: 'O Tazhav!

Where are thy host, thy mettle, and thy might
That thou shouldst turn thy back upon me thus,
And leave me in this castle shamefully?
Give me a seat behind thee; let me not
Be left inside the castle for the foe.'

The heart of proud Tazhav was set on fire,
And his cheeks flamed. She mounted swift as wind
Behind him on his steed and clasped his waist.
He rushed along like dust with Ispanwi;
They made toward Turan. The charger sped
Awhile till man and beast were both fordone,
And then Tazhav addressed his handmaid, saying:—

'O my fair mate! here is a grievous case!
My charger is exhausted with this work,
Foes are behind, in front is a ravine,
And though we race Bizhan some distance yet
Still they will have their will of us at last;
So as they are not enemies to thee
Remain behind while I urge on my horse.'

Then Ispanwi alighted from the steed:
Tazhav's face was all tears at losing her,
Yet sped he on to reach Afrasiyab.

This is a beautiful piece of poetic description from the great epic. But the poetic incident finds such a wonderfully close parallel in an actual event from contemporary Parthian history recorded by Tacitus that identity of the two episodes becomes most probable. Let us remember, again, that inferentially

from Firdausi's account the incident occurred during the reign of Vologeses I, since its hero is again the same Bezan who was the foe of Palashan (Vologeses). According to Tacitus also (*Annals*, Book XII, 51), the event happened in the Time of Vologeses I. The names of the husbands are indeed different; Firdausi calls him by the name of Tazhav, while he is called Rhadamistus in Tacitus. On the other hand, the names of the heroines are not very different—being Zenobia in the Annals of Tacitus, and Ispanoe in the Shahnameh. It is difficult at least to believe that in the reign of the same prince Vologeses I, two incidents of so singular a character and remarkable in their resemblance to each other took place as are recorded in the two great authors. It is such a rare treat to compare the treatment of the same incident by masters like Firdausi and Tacitus that I quoted the translation of the relevant paragraph from Tacitus as translated by Church and Brodribb:

'Rhadamistus had no means of escape but in the swiftness of the horse which bore him and his wife away. Pregnant as she was, she endured, somehow or other, out of fear of the enemy and love of her husband, the first part of the flight, but after a while, when she felt herself shaken by its continuous speed, she implored to be rescued by an honourable death from the shame of captivity. He at first embraced, cheered, and encouraged her, now admiring her heroism, now filled with a sickening apprehension at the idea of her being left to any man's mercy. Finally, urged by the intensity of his love and familiarity with dreadful deeds, he unsheathed his scymitar, and

having stabbed her, dragged her to the bank of the Araxes and committed her to the stream, so that her very body might be swept away. Then in headlong flight he hurried to Iberia, his ancestral kingdom. Zenobia meanwhile (this was her name), as she yet breathed and showed signs of life on the calm water at the river's edge, was perceived by some shepherds, who infering from her noble appearance that she was no base-born woman, bound up her wound and applied to it their rustic remedies. As soon as they knew her name and her adventure, they conveyed her to the city of Artaxata, whence she was conducted at the public charge to Tiridates, who received her kindly and treated her as a royal person.'

### THE BALLAD OF BEZAN AND MENIZEH.

A critic might well raise the objection that according to Tacitus the heroine Zenobia as well as her husband Rhadomistus belonged to Armenia; that the incident of the flight of the two occurred in Armenia; and, finally, that we have so far given no proof that the house of Gotarzes was in any way connected with that country. To these queries the reply might be made that abundant proof can be furnished from the Shahnameh and other sources of the part taken by Bezan (descendants of Gew, the house of Gotarzes) in the affairs of Armenia. In the first place reference might be made to the ballad of Bezan and Menizeh incorporated in the Shahnameh. Following the usual convention in that epic (in which Afrasyab is made the constant, and sole adversary of all Knights of the round table) Menizeh is represented as the daughter of that Turanian king.

As a matter of fact, as Justi has shown, Menizeh is the feminine form of the Parthian name Manec. Now a Parthian of that name held command for the Parthian king in Armenia and defeated the famous Roman general Corbulo (cf. Tacitus, *Annals*, Book XV, 2–4). What is again most important for our purpose and for the history of the house of Gotarzes is that this nobleman Manec lived in the time of King Vologeses I and it was this king who carried on (what Tacitus calls) 'the old feud' with the house of Gotarzes. Here is a reference which might be said to give something like a date to the happenings which have been poetized in the ballad of Bezan and Menizeh. The presence of a noble of the name of Manec in Armenia, and the existence of constant civil wars among Parthian nobles sets just the scene required for such occurrences as are sung in the ballad. There is nothing improbable in the son of a Parthian Montague (Bezan) falling in love with the daughter of a Capulet of the same race (Manec, the father of the fair Menizeh) and of being taught in his hours of imprisonment that 'love is too rough, too rude, too boisterous'. There is also the ancient tradition which lingered in Armenia that Bezan (of the house of Gotarzes) was imprisoned for his love of Menizeh in a cave at the place called Phyatkaran in that country—a tradition of which we learn from Mose's Geography. Nor does even this exhaust the proof of the activity of Bezan in Armenia. The Shahnameh begins the episode by observing that King Kaikhusrau had deputed Bezan to relieve the people of Arman (Armenians) from the inroads of wild boars. Moreover, the companion of Bezan's adventures in the ballad bears the name of

Gurgin (Warkaina in Pehlevi). Now a reference to this name in Justi's Namenbuch will show how often it was borne by princes and nobles of old Iberia and Armenia. Indeed it is very remarkable how names of the house of Gotarzes—particularly those of Gew, Gurazeh, and Bezan have lingered among the noble houses of Georgia and Iberia, almost up to our own days. These very names were used, even in South Russia for some centuries. I emphasize this in order to show the general and long continued popularity of the legends of the house of Gotarzes in Northern Iran and adjacent countries like Armenia, since it is popular legends which are often the sources of current names.

### DECLINE OF THE HOUSE OF GOTARZES.

Those national traditions and minstrelsy which extolled so well the exploits of the house of Gotarzes did not fail to gild its abrupt decline, even though classical history has failed to give us any direct description of it. Nevertheless, we get some hints even from Roman historians of great nomadic movements which were bound to prove very prejudicial to the house of Gotarzes which ruled over Hyrcania. It is very significant that the house of Gotarzes suddenly disappears from view in Parthian history, as left to us by classical historians; nor are we left quite without any clue as to the cause of this catastrophe. In the reign of Vologeses I, Parthia, Media, and Armenia as well as the Near East were overrun by nomads like the Alani from the East coast of the Caspian and by the Kushans who were driving the Tokharians before them (Gutschmidt, pp. 133–37, Rawlinson, Parthia, pp. 294–6, Sykes,

Vol. I, p. 379). As regards the Alani it has been supposed that their intervention was invited by the Hyrcanians themselves. But the Kushan and other nomadic invasions were of a different character, and it seems most probable that the house of Gotarzes suffered severely in the struggle which must have taken place. Hyrcania, it is true, continued an independent existence for decades, since it sent an embassy to the Emperor Antoninus Pius about the year 155 A. D. (Gutschmidt, p. 134). But we hear no more of the house of Gotarzes.

What we can thus merely conjecture from our knowledge of classical history and of Kushan invasions is amply described in the Shahnameh. There we have poetic descriptions of the heavy losses sustained by the family of Gotarzes in the course of wars with Kamus, the Kushan chief and other Turanian chiefs. Of course in the Shahnameh all invasions from Central Asia are attributed to the instigation of King Afrasyab. But the descriptions in the Shahnameh leave us in no doubt about the vast and mixed nomad army of Kushans and other races which rushed down on the North and West of Parthia. The passage from Firdausi dealing with description of the allied and mixed nomads has been so well-translated by the Warners that I beg leave to quote from their version:

بشد پهلوانِ تا سر تیغ کوه — بدیدار خاقان و توران گروه
سپه دید چندان که دریای روم — ازیشان نمودي چو یک مهرهٔ موم
کشاني و شکني و وهري سیاه — دگر گونه جوشن دگر گون کلاه
چغانی و چینی و سقلاب و هند — کهانی و رومی و نهری و سند
زبانی دگر گون بهسر گوشهٔ — درفشی نو آئین و نو توشهٔ

'The mighty Rustam climbed the heights to view
The Khan and army of Turan; he saw
A host so mighty that the sea of Rum
Seemed but a lump of wax compared to them!
The troops were from Kashan and Shakn and Wahr,
With divers coats of mail and divers helms,
Troops from Chaghan and Chin, Saklab and Hind,
Gahan and Rum, Sind and the Indus-banks.
In every quarter there were alien tongues.
Strange flags and meats!'

A great compliment is paid in the Persian epic to the leader of the Kushans.

ز کاموس خود جای گفتار نیست — که ما را بدو راه دیدار نیست
درختیست بارش همه گرز و تیغ — که گر بر سرش سنگ بارد ز میغ
ز پیلان جنگی نجوید گریز — سرش پر ز کینه دلش پر ستیز

'About Kamus himself we cannot speak,
For we have had no means of seeing him.
He is a Tree whose Fruits are mace and sword,
And, though the clouds rained stones upon his head,
He would not flee from elephants of war:
His head is full of wreak, his heart of strife.'

Nor is the actual course which the Kushan's invasion followed historically in various directions left obscure in the topic. For, as their leader says:

بهره رانم ازین پس سپاه  کنم روز بر شاه ایران سیاه
یکی بهره ز ایشان فرستم ببلخ  بر ایرانیان بر کنم روز تلخ
دگر بهره بر سوی کابلستان  بکابل کشم خاک زابلستان
سوم بهره بر سوی ایران برم  ز ترکان بزرگان و شیران برم
زن و کودک و خورد و پیر و جوان  نمانم که ماند تنی پر روان
بر و بوم ایران نماند بجای  که نه دست بادا ازیشان نه پای

'Then will I part our army into three,
And darken the Iranian monarch's day.
I will dispatch one army unto Balkh,
And make day bitter to the Iranians,
Another to Kabulistan and bring
Kabul the ashes of Zabulistan,
And lead the third compact of mighty Turkmans
And Lions 'gainst Iran. I will spare none,
Not women, little children, young or old,
But overthrow Iran, both field and fell.
May not a hand or foot be left to them!'

It was in such struggle with nomadic invasion that the great catastrophe of the house of Gotarzes happened:

در کاخ گودز کشوادگان  تهی شد ز گردان و ازادگان
ستاره بر ایشان بنالد همی  بپالیز گلبن بنالد همی
ازیشان جهان پر ز خاکست و خون  ... ... ...

'The portal of the palace of Gudarz,
Son of Kishwad, is void of men of war
And chiefs. The very stars are wailing them,
The rose no longer groweth in the garden,
The world through them is filled with dust
and blood.'

### CHRONOLOGICAL PARALLELISM.

Finally we might proceed to give a brief and convenient summary of the chronological parallelism between the narrative in the Shahnameh and the sequence of events in Parthian History.

| *Parthian history.* | *Narrative of Shahnameh.* |
|---|---|
| Vardanes assassinated (45 A.D.). | Death of Farud. |
| Reign of Gotarzes (51 A.D). | Gudarz made commander. |
| Reign of Vologeses I and civil wars in Parthia (A.D.51–75). | Bezan's combats with Palashan. |
| (The flight of Rhadamistus and the capture of his wife Zenobia A. D. 51?) | (Tazhav is pursued and deprived of his wife Ispanoe.) |
| Invasion of Parthia by the Alani and the Kushans. Disappearance of the house of Gotarzes. | The battles of Lādan and Hamāwan; the war of Kamus the Kushani. Fall of the "seventy ssns" of Gotarzes. |

Obviously the parallelism of history and epic is very close chronologically and such substantial parallelism strongly confirms our identification of particular heroes and incidents of the epic with those of history.

### ARGUMENTS FROM THE METHODS OF WARFARE.

Another corroborative argument for our view (that in the episodes in question we are dealing with Parthian history) is to be found in the methods of

warfare employed. The accounts of fighting are highly realistic and give excellent examples of archery and cavalry engagements—aspects of war in which the Parthians excelled. The conventions and fictions of fighting which Firdausi observes in other parts of the epic are dropped here. Elsewhere the whole course of war is made to depend upon a single combat in which the Iranian hero—be it Rustam or Kershasp infallibly kills his opponent with a stroke of sword or mace and the victory is won ; not so in the episodes with which we are concerned. There, to take but one example, one Iranian hero after another is unhorsed or disabled by the well-directed arrows of Farud (Vardanes). Just so we can imagine that the historical Vardanes must have faced the attack of the nobles who had conspired against him, and must have brought down several of them by his skilful archery before he was overpowered. Let us glance next at the combat between Bezan and Palashan. Here again we seem to have before us a typical case of a cavalry raid and a sudden encounter and clash between two mounted bodies. The spirited passage in the Shahnameh is well-translated by the Warners :

پلاشان یکی آهو افگنده بود  کبابش بر آتش پراگنده بود
همي خورد اسپش چمان و چران  پلاشان فگنده ببازو کمان
چو اسپش ز دور اسپ بیژن بدید  خروشی بر اورد و اندر دمید
پلاشان بدانست کامد سوار  بیامد پسچیدهٔ کارزار
... ... ...  یکی بانگ برزد ببیژن بلند

'Now Palashan, who had brought down a deer,
Was roasting some kabab upon a fire,
And eating with his bow upon his arm,
The while his horse was ranging free to graze
It saw afar the charger of Bizhan,
Neighed loudly, and ran in; so Palashan
Knew that a horseman came prepared for fight,
And shouted to Bizhan.'

Finally, we come to the great struggles at Lādan and Hamāwan with the allied nomads from Tartary and Central Asia. Here, again, the accounts of warfare in the Shahnameh are highly realistic, and there is a very exact pointing of the might of the allied nomads advancing on Persia, and the manœuvres and shifts to which the Iranian army facing them had to resort. Thus we find Fariburz, the Iranian general, resorting to a truce in order to gain time. Not succeeding in this the Iranians retire and fortify themselves on mount Hamāwan and thence attempt night attacks on the foe. In a word, in the episodes with which we are dealing, the usual poetic conventions are laid aside and the Iranians (Parthians in this case) on the one hand, and the nomads on the other, are unmistakably realistic and life like.

## CAUSES OF THE UNRIVALLED POPULARITY OF THE HOUSE OF GOTARZES IN PARTHIA.

The last problem which we shall discuss in the present paper is this: how can we account for the unrivalled popularity of the house of Gotarzes in the whole range of Parthian heroes and princes? Parthia

produced many princes far more eminent than Gotarzes. There is, for example, Mithradates II who saved Parthia and expanded it by the crushing defeats which he inflicted on the Sakae. There was Orodes I in whose time Crassus was defeated and slain. Thre was prince Pacorus who conquered Syria, and Phraates IV who withstood and drove back Mark Antony. Yet none of them are remembered in the national epic. While they are utterly forgotten, to Gotarzes, and his family are devoted hundreds of pages in the Shahnameh; and yet, in the opinion of an able historian like Rawlinson, the civil wars waged by Gotarzes and his successors were a main factor in the decline of Parthia.

We have seen already how many episodes in the Shahnameh are devoted to the house of Gotarzes. Let us now contrast with this the slight mention made of some other Parthian heroes in the great epic. It might be mentioned that the only sequential narration of exploits among the Parthian notabilities is reserved for the house of Gotarzes—the others being given, so to say, only an occasional look in. Thus the claims of the great house of Karen which not only upheld Parthian monarchy but produced some of the finest heroes of the Sassanian age could not be entirely overlooked in the Shanameh. But, as we have said, the mention is brief and occasional. A Karen is mentioned in the age of Minochihr and his successors and others in the ages of Shapor II, Yezdegerd I, and Bahram Gor. The virtues of a Sokhra or Sufrai are mentioned under kings Peroz and Kobad. And if the house of Karen had to be content with occasional mention, other families could not expect more. The famous

house of Mihran comes into view only now and then in the persons of Milad and of Gurgin; even of such prominence it owed a great proportion to its feud with the house of Gotarzes. As for the other great Parthian house of Suren, which counted in its genealogy, several king-makers as well as the great general who defeated Crassus, it is unrepresented in the Shahnameh, except by the traitor Mahoi Suri who betrayed the last Sassanian monarch.

But while the house of Gotarzes had the good fortune to secure the lion's share of poetic fame in the national epic, it received something like apotheosis in religious works like the Dadistan-i-Dinik. There its ancestor Gew is mentioned as one of the heroes who will assist in the work of inaugurating the millennium (West, *Pehlevi Texts*, II, 78).

How then can we account for the pre-eminence accorded to the house of Gotarzes both in the national epic as well as in religious tradition? A conjectural reply is alone possible under the circumstances, but a comprehensive study of the history of Gotarzes and his family does suggest some considerations very relevant to the matter. One great title of Gotarzes and his descendants to great provincial gratitude and historical reputation was its successful assertion of the independence of the Hyrcanian nation against Parthia after a long period of dependence. They not only secured its independence but obtained for it an international recognition as we learn from the embassies sent by it to Rome.

A still greater and indeed indisputable title of the house of Gotarzes to epic renown was the gallant resistance which it offered to the flood of Kushan and other nomadic invaders. As the Shahnameh repeatedly asserts, the house of Gotarzes lost most of its members in fighting for Iran against these nomads. Obviously its great sacrifices saved the situation, for both Parthia and Hyrcania escaped the fate which the nomads dealt out to other countries of the Near East. For obout 40 A. D., Kudschala-Kara-Kadphises I had consolidated the Kushan states; while under his son Wima-Kadphises II, the Kushan power stretched from Central Asia to Benares and Gujrat on the South. The Western Satrapies and South-West Seistan were overwhelmed (Goetz, Epochen der Indischen Kultur, p. 144).

Such was the danger against which the house of Gotarzes had to strive—in some sort of collaboration, of course, with the main Parthian dominions.

An additional factor must be taken into account which contributed to the glorification of the house of Gotarzes. As Dr. Gray (of Columbia University) has pointed out it was in the East and North of Iran that the religious tradition of Zoroastrians was formed. As a result, Median and Parthian kings, provided they struck the popular imagination sufficiently, had a chance of receiving apotheosis; but not one of the Achaemenid or Sassanide kings from the West could aspire to it. I have attempted to show in my paper on 'Azi Dahāka in History and Legend'* that it was King Huwakhsh-

* *J.P.A.S.B.*, Vol. XXVI, 1930, page 467.

atara (Cyaxares) of Media who was apotheosized as Hushedar, one of the leading heroes of the Iranian millennium. He owed this greatness to his conquest of Nineveh and to his success in meeting the great Scythian incursion of his day. It might be conjectured that the apotheosis of the hero Gew (of the family of Gotarzes) was to some extent due to the brave opposition which he and his family offered to the Kushan and other nomadic invasions of their time.

It is necessary to add a word regarding the artistic effect upon the Iranian epos of the grafting of the history of the Parthian house of Gotarzes upon the much older legend of Kai Khusrau which goes back to the age of the Awesta. To put the matter quite briefly, from the historical point of view, the result was hopeless entanglement and confusion of narratives belonging to widely different periods. But from the artistic point of view, the result has been unexpectedly brilliant—thanks to the consummate skill both of Firdausi and of the earlier ballad-writers on whose compositions he drew. In the first place, flesh and blood was added to the meagre outlines of the wars of Kai Khusrau with which the Awesta had supplied posterity. The void left by the Awesta was filled up with stirring events from Parthian history. The bards and admirers of the Parthian dynasties and families were also gratified by the fact that the glory and exploits of these houses were clothed in the halo and prestige of an indefinitely remote past. We, too, have reason to be gratified as lovers of poetry; for the piling up of the tragedy of the house of Gotarzes on that of Siyawash and his great

son has called out the full genius and powers of Firdausi and his nameless predecessors, and has given them a task of immense poetic possibilities. The national poetic genius was beautifully adapted to the treatment and tracing of vendettas and tragedies; and the mixing up of knightly exploits, tragic events and stern vendettas of the houses of Kai Khusrau and Gotarzes furnished the bards with a milieu in which they could revel, and an atmosphere in which the brightest as well as the most sombre colours could be employed alternately to the greatest artistic advantage.

# 8

## RUSTAM IN LEGEND AND HISTORY.

The task of finding the substratum of historical truth about the Achilles of the East is naturally a difficult one. Still more difficult might well be considered the task of assigning even an approximate date to his career. The reason is that the poetic genius of Persia was too strong for its historic sense. The true historical stratification has been distorted in the case of Persia almost deliberately by the writers of its epics and ballads who strove to make all the heroes of ancient Iran shine simultaneously at the court of Kai Khosrau. The poets in fact vied with each other to lighten the glamour of the "Round Table" of Kai Khosrau and to give it "an all star cast". The result is that in the Shahnameh we find ancient Awesta heroes like Tusa (Taosa) and Gustehem (Vistauru) rubbing shoulders with much later Parthian monarchs like Gudarz (Gotarzes). Historical confusion could go no farther; but fortunately there are certain indications in the Shahnameh itself which assist us to pierce the veil of time and epic imagination. In particular, as has been often remarked by Marquardt and others, we can distinguish numerous forms of Parthian history in the epic, and indeed a good deal of Parthian history lies imbedded in the Shahnameh. The house of Gotarzes holds indeed the pride of place and has the lion's share of episodes and adventures. In a paper

which I read last year before the Asiatic Society of Bengal I have attempted to discuss the causes of the unrivalled popularity enjoyed by the family of Gotarzes in the Persian epic. But other Parthian houses also find a mention in the Shahnameh. Thus there is the house of Caren (قارن) and that of Meherdates (مهرداد). But these other families secure only occassional mention—and that not always of the most honourable character. Thus Gurgin of the family of Meherdates is represented as a treacherous friend and dishonourable man. Another Parthian prince Faribarz (Priapatius in the classics) is represented as turning his back on the enemy until his flight is arrested by a prince of the house of Gotarzes.

But not only is the house of Gotarzes placed in the forefront of the historical stage; the Shahnameh and the ballads upon which it is based have done us a real service by showing the very close historical connection of that Parthian house with the personality of Rustam, and have thus supplied us with the most important clue for assigning a date to the historical career of Rustam. In the paper which I have just mentioned I have tried to show that the epic hero Gudarz can be identified with King Gotarzes of Parthia who ruled during the period from A.D. 46 to about A.D. 51; and that when the Iranian epic narrates the battles of Ladan and Hamawan where Gudarz lost so many of his gallant sons it is reffering to the invasions of the Alani, the Dahae and the Kushan barbarians which apparently led to the sudden disappearance of the house of Gotarzes. On the subject of these invasions and the

simultaneous disappearance of the house of Gotarzes a reference might be made with advantage to the works of Gutschmidt (pages 133–37) and Rawlinson ("Parthia" pp. 294–96). Since thus we are on sure chronological ground as regards Gudarz and his family and we can approach the task of determining the historical position and date of Rustam if we can show from the epic a very close and contemporaneous relation between the two heroes.

Fortunately upon this point the Shahnameh leaves us in no doubtfnl attitude. It affords us numerous indications of the close and uniqe connection between Rustam and the house of Gotarzes. No other family mentioned in the epic can boast of anything like a similarly close connection with the hero of Seistan. It is very necessary for us to give something like a detailed account of this intimate relation of Rustam with the house of Gotarzes :

(1) The house of Gotarzes is the only family in the epic with which the hero of Seistan is mentioned as contracting a matrimonial alliance. It is stated expressly however that Rustam gave his eldest daughter Banu Gushasp to Gew son of Gotarzes. Thus in the epic Gew is made to boast of this honour :

بمن داد رستم گزین دخترش ـ کهٔ بودی گرامی تر از اخترش
مهین دخت بانو گشسپ سوار ـ بمن داد گردنکش نامدار
زچندین بزرگان مرا برگزید ـ سرم را بچرخ برین برکشید

This can be translated by saying that the various heroes of Iran demanded the hand of the daughter of

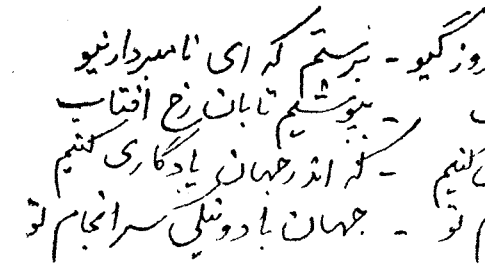
Rustam in marriage but that the great warrior did not consider them — in particular Tusa—worthy of that honour. But he willingly gave his favourite daughter to Gew. Not content with this one sided matrimonial arrangement, Rustam honoured the house of Gotarzes further by marrying the sister of Gew whose name was Shahr Banu Iram. As the epic observes:

سپردم بر رستم همی خواهرم ـ مه بانوان شهربانو ارم
بجز پیلتن رستم شیردرد ـ ندارم گمانی همی هم نبرد

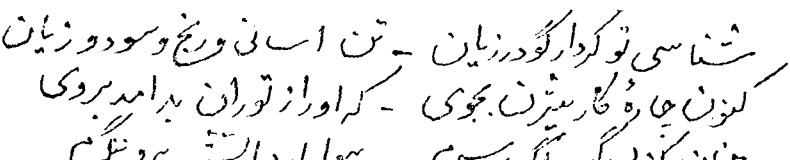
Obviously there can be no stronger proof of the contemporaneous existence and common date of two epic personges than the fact of such matrimonial relations.

(2) A further proof of the intimate relations between Rustam and the house of Gotarzes is afforded by the fact that Gew the son of Gotarzes inspired and initiated one of the most famous exploits of Rustam. Thus the famous episode of the exploits of Rustam in the hunting ground of Afrasyab originated in a suggestion of Gew. Rustam, so we are told, had given an entertainment to other Iranian heroes at the place called Rawend which was well-known as the place of a famous sacred fire. After some days had elapsed during which the festivities had been prolonged it was Gew who suggested to Rustam the very bold course of concluding the entertainment by organising a hunting party in the favourite pleasure ground of Afrasyab himself. No more daring suggestion could have been

made; and no one could have accepted it more eagerly than Rustam:



(3) On another occasion too it was left to a prince of the house of Gotarzes to figure as the occasion for one of the most famous exploits of Rustam. For when Bezan had been betrayed by Gurgin and had been thrown into the subterranean prison of the tyrant Afrasyab it was Rustam who once more came to the rescue of the house of Gotarzes by going to Turan and rescuing Bezan. Here again the Shahnameh recognises that Rustam was ever the shield of the house of Gudarz:



(4) But Rustam was destined to give a still further proof of his sympathy and zeal for the house of Gotarzes. It was when the fortunes of the house of Gotarzes were on the decline, when most of the sons of Gotarzes had lost their lives in the battles of Ladan and Hamawan, and when the Kushans, the Alani and the Dahae barbarians were threatening to extirpate the house of Gotarzes, that the appearance of Rustam

on the scene of warfare turned the tide of battle. It was then that the departed spirit of Siyawush appeared to the Iranian heroes promising the speedly arrival of succour under Rustam. It was then that Gudarz proceeded to the top of a lofty hill to view the gladdening sight of Rustam hastening to his assistance:

چنین گفت کای پهلوان سپاه ـ از ایران سپاه اندر آرزدشاه
چو برنبدگان کارگردد دراز ـ خداوند گیتی کند پیش باز
کنون تا نگوئی که رستم کجاست ـ زغمها نگردد مرا پشت راست

(5) It remains to give one more instance of Rustam extending a helping hand to Gotarzes and his family. In the Shah-Namah we read how Kai Kawoos, Gudarz, Gew and other heroes had been worsted and imprisoned in Mazendran. In this case also it was Rustam who hurried to the help, went through the Seven Labours (Haftkhwan), defeated the White Demon and rescued the Iranian chivalry. While the Shahnameh attributes the expeditions of the Iranians into Mazendran to the rashness of Kai Kawoos, we possess other sources of information which put a different complexion upon the matter. We learn from Tacitus and other classical historians of the close connection of the house of Gotarzes with Hyrcania (Mazendran). Whenever Gotarzes was hard pressed in Parthia he used to take refuge in Mazendran. This piece of information should make us put another interpretation upon the activities of Rustam in Mazendran. It might well be that these activities were in the interests not so much of Kai Kawoos (a very

remote and mythical figure) but in those of Gotarzes who is known to history not only as the ruler of Mazendran (Hyrcania) but as a prince whose conduct towards his subjects led very often to rebellions against him:

چو از دژ رهی کرد کاوس را ـ همان گیو و گودرز و هم طوس را

The above examples have been cited to show that in most of the great exploits of Rustam, Gotarzes and his family figure as the initiating party or at least serve as the occasion. It is only when we catalogue the adventures of Rustam that we find how many of them were undertaken on behalf of the family of Gotarzes. From this it can be reasonably inferred that Rustam and Gotarzes were contemporaries and since the latter reigned in Iran from A. D. 46 to A. D. 51 and since his dynasty disappeared abruptly about A. D. 75 in the confusion and tumult which accompanied the barbarian invasions, we can conclude that in all probability Rustam lived about the same time.

Fortunately we also possess a second converging line of proof which also leads to the conclusion that Rustam's exploits were performed about the middle of the first century of the Christian era. One of the biggest and most noteworthy warlike efforts of Rustam described in the Shahnameh is his fight with the Kushan invaders; and thanks to the efforts of Prof. Sten Konow, Vincent Smith, Sir John Marshall, Prof. Rapson and other scholars we can date pretty exactly the Kushan invasion of the Kabul valley (Ki-pin) and India. Thus

the capture of Kabul by the Kushans has been dated by Sir John Marshall about A. D. 60, and Prof. Sten Konow infers that the Kushan leader Kujula Kadphises lived on till after A.D. 80 (cf. "Notes on Indo-Scythian Chronology" by Prof. Sten Konow in the the Journal of Indian History, April 1933, page 32). In A. D. 79 we find the Taxila silver scroll mentioning the Kushan ruler who was very likely the same Kujula Kadphises. So also it is very likely that Kadphises I united the five separate tribes of the Yueh-Chi during the period A. D. 40-78. (Encyclopædia Britannica Vol. 12 page 187). Mr. Vincent Smith observes that the reign of Kadphises II "covered a space of about 33 years, from A. D. 55 to 78." (Early History of India, 3rd edition, page 255). Since the Shahnameh attaches great importance to the exploits of Rustam against the Kushans, we have here a corroboration of the view that *the career of Rustam is to be placed in the first century of the Christian era.*

The Iranian epic narrates with a wealth of detail and realistic circumstances the Kushan invasion and the combined efforts of the Parthians and the Sakas to stem it in its progress to the West. We have got in the Shahnameh an awe inspiring picture of the Kushan prince Kamus, his physical strength and his military might. We are told there that he stood at the head of a great Scythian confederacy which intended to push its conquests in three directions—alike in Persia, Seistan and India. The name Kamus is obviously a reminiscence of the half-forgotten names of Kadphises and Kanishka—the distinguished prices of Kushans.

By the side of Kamus the Shahnameh places Shankal the King of India. The introduction of this conventional name of the Indian Kings implies a recognition by the epic tradition that the Kushans had already penetrated into India. The description in the epic of Shankal riding an elephant in the battle and urging it on Rustam might have been inspired by the coins of Kanishka on which the king is represented as riding an elephant. In fact Kamus and Shankal are only duplications of the same central figure.

It was indeed an occasion which required the combined and strenuous exertions of the Parthians and the Sakas. The Shahnameh acknowledges the seriousness of the position. The Persian army had been defeated in two great battles and besieged in the mountains of Hamawan, when Rustam arrived to rescue it from its desperate position. Historically also the position was equally serious. As Prof. Sten Konow has observed Kujula Kadphises had not only consolidated his power but had seized Kao-fu (the Kabul valley) from the Pahlavas who had conquered it from the Greeks. The Kushan capture of Kabul is dated by the same authority at about A.D. 60. Not content with this Kujula Kadphises was invading An-si (Parthia). This career of conquest has been described for us by Prof. Sten Konow on the authority of the Chinese historian Tsien Han-shu. Now we can well imagine that Rustam, the prince of Seistan, felt himself threatened by the Seizure of Kabul and the Kushan march over the northern limits of Seistan towards Parthia. We can thus infer how natural it

was of Rustam to hurry to the assistance of the Iranians. Thus the latest historical research helps us to understand fully the narrative of the Shah-Nameh as well as to find out the chronological date of Rustam. If that hero performed his great exploits for the support of the house of Gotarzes and in opposing the Kushans his date is not difficult to determine. It is obviously to be found somewhere in the first Christian century.

Let us proceed a little further and try to surmise the position of Rustam with reference to the Parthian federation. Why was it that he felt it his duty to perform so many services to a Parthian prince like Gotarzes? Here again we shall find an interesting parallelism between the epic and historical accounts. The Shah-Namah describes Rustam as the right hand man of Persian kings and their constant helper. He is a sort of Viceroy not only of Seistan but of Kabul and of certain Indian possessions.

In fact so far as the epic is concerned Rustam fills the role of the great Indo-Parthian princes of which a long line ruled with distinction in Arachosia and Seistan, as well as of the great Satraps who held various parts of India. The earliest of these Indo-Parthian kings was Maues, but there were other distinguished princes like Azes I, Azes II and Gondophares. (cf. Vincent Smith, Early History of India, pages 226 to 236). There has been a great deal of discussion as regards the relations of these Indo-Parthian princes with the kings of Parthia. It is however generally known that the Parthian constitution was

that of a loose confideracy and that it contained semi-independent princes especially on the borders. Thus in Armenia we find semi-independant princes like Artavasdes; in Atropatene there was Vonones II to whom the crown was given after the death of Gotarzes. In Mesopotamia at time of the invasion by Trojan, it was not the king of Parthia but a prince—Meborsapes—who organised the national resistence. So also Philostratus places an almost independent king Vardanes on the Indus as a Parthian ruler. Clearly it was a similar position which Rustam occupied in Seistan. That explains why he proceeded so often to the assistance of his over-lord Gotarzes king of Parthia and why he fought so manfully on his behalf. But the Parthian princes loved on occasion to assert their independence; and that is why on several occasions in the Shahnameh Rustam is seen to disobey the king of Iran. His usual residence is in Seistan and, he goes to the court only when he is specially summoned to meet some crises like an invasion on the part of Afrasiyab or Sohrab. Even then he takes his own time and will not be hurried. Thus the anger of Kai Kawoos was roused at the leisurely way in which Rustam marched to his assistance against Sohrab; and then there was a stormy scene between Rustam and his over-lord in which at last the latter had to humble his royal pride and temper. Such scenes must have often occurred at the historical court of Ctesiphon. Nor did the Parthian princes hesitate to take sides in the case of a disputed succession. So also in the epic when there was a struggle for succession between Kai Khosrau and Fariberz the nobles took different sides

and the sympathies of Rustam were in favour of the former.

The account of the death of Rustam as supplied to us by Firdausi—or rather by his venerable informant Azad-Sarw appears to be based upon historical facts. If it is the function of poetry to translate fact into epic, it is the prosaic task of the student of history to retranslate the epic into historical happenings. In this spirit we might proceed to interpret the beautiful account furnished by Azad-Sarw to Firdausi. As the former traced his lineage to Sam and Nariman it is not unlikely that his story embodied traditional accounts. To put it briefly, Shugad, the illegitimate brother of Rustam, conspired with the king of Kabul to terminate the career of the great hero of Seistan. The latter was allured to into a plain where he and his horse fell into a deep and well-hidden pit. However, Rustam had the satisfaction of putting an arrow through his treacherous brother Shugad who was hiding behind a tree and enjoying the death pangs of the great warrior. This romantic story can be interpreted on historical lines. The Sakas evidently regarded the Sogdians as related to them but of an inferior status, perhaps because they allowed themselves to be conquered by the Kushans. The prince of Kabul would naturally be of the Kushan tribe himself because as we have seen the Kushans captured Kabul about A. D. 60. Thus the alliance between the Sogdian and the Kushan against the Saka leader Rustam would appear to be a perfectly natural one. In the struggle which followed, the Sakas and their leader were allured towards a battle-field

where pits and trenches had been dug and prepared in advance. These proved fatal to the Saka cavalry; but they were amply avenged by the archery of their side which managed, at the end of the battle, to pick off quite a number of the leaders of Sogdiana and Kabul. Thus we see that in this episode Rustam stands not only in his personal capacity but as the representative of the Saka army. It is a common procedure in epics to describe the fortunes of a whole race in narrating what purports to be the personal history of a racial hero.

There is no better example of such a procedure than the case of Zal–the legendery father of Rustam. There are very good reasons for supposing that the name Zal was only a patronymic and not the name of any individual. For one thing another name has also been supplied to us by the epic as that of the father of Rustam; and this real name was Dastan. Secondly, there are hardly any adventures or exploits to the credit of Zal in the Shahnameh and this although he has been credited with an enormous span of life which is better suited to be that of a race than of an individual. I might be permitted, therefore, to put forward the suggestion that Zal was a name of a tribe–most likely that of the particular branch of the Sakas to which Rustam belonged. Other consideration might be brought forward in support of the view which I have advanced. Thus we know that the Sakas had effected conquests in India reaching as far as Kathiawar and Malava. (cf. Prof. Sten Konow's article cited already, page 19; Vincent Smith, pages 211–217). It is significant that the name Zal is associated with these conquests of the Sakas and

survives to-day in names like Jhalawad ("the district of the Zals") and Jhalrapatam ("the town of the Zals"). We also note that the name Jhalawad survives in both parts of India where the Sakas had conquered and settled down, viz., Kathiawar and Malava. These facts might well indicate that Zal was the name of one of the numerous Saka clans, and that the expression "Rustam-i-Zal" meant not "Rustam the son of Zal" but "Rustan the Zal".

Around the historical figure of Rustam there have gathered numerous other semi-historical accounts and legends. It is a common trait of the epics to concentrate exploits round certain personalities in order to augment their grandeur. Indeed even before the rise of regular epics there must have been their component ballads on which they are based; and the composers and singers of these ballads must have themselves been under similar temptations and must have followed the same tendencies. Naturally, therefore, numerous earlier and later traditions tended to gather round the figure of the best known historical figure of Seistan—the hero of Kushan and other wars. Thus Rustam was also made the hero of the fight with Isfandiyar (Spentodata) the son of Gushtasp. Obviously if the historical Rustam lived in the first century he could not possibly have met in combat Isfandiyar who was the contemporary of Zoroaster and whose career must be dated at at least six or seven centuries before the Christian era. (cf. Prof. Williams Jackson, Zoroastrian Studies, p. 24). To say this is not to deny the connection of Gushtasp, of his brother Zarir and of his son Isfandiar

with the province of Seistan. For the Avesta itself connects Gushtasp with Seistan; while Pahlavi works like the Shatroiha mention Zarir in connection with Bust. No doubt warlike enterprises were undertaken by Gushtasp and his family in province. (cf. Jackson, *op. cit.*, pp. 279–282). As Prof. Jackson observes, the connection of Gushtasp with Seistan was not "without religious importance" and it was there that he "first gave the new creed impetus by his powerful propaganda in behalf of the faith". It can well be surmised that the work of Gushtasp in that province was carried on by his crown prince Isfandiar; but according to the Shahnameh the spirit in which the crown prince worked was not entirely worthy of the cause. For he insisted on carrying away the venerable prince of Seistan bound and captive to Iran. Moreover humiliations were heaped upon that prince in other ways. We need not therefore wonder that the patience of the prince and the people of Seistan was ultimately exhausted, and that Isfandiar was killed in the fight which followed All this corresponded with historical reality; but it is impossible that it was the *historical* Rustam, the opponent of the Kushans, was the prince who met Isfandiar in moral combat.

## RUSTAM AND MONGOLIAN LEGENDS.

The Saga of Rustam furnishes numerous illustrations of the migration of legends over vast geographical areas. Thus from far away Mongolia hails the legend of Bogda Gessar Khan which throws much light on at least one episode of Rustam's career in the Shahnameh. In that epic Rustam is represented as

losing his horse in the course of hunting expedition, as going on foot to Samangan, and as marrying its princess Tehmina. The warrior Sohrab was the fruit of this marriage and in a combat with Rustam he vanquished his father twice in wrestling. In the Mongolian account also the father is twice overthrown in wrestling with his son. But that affair, although very significant, is not most important aspect of the parallelism between the Iranian and the Mongolian accounts. What is very noticeable is that the love story of Rustam and Tehmina is told in the Mongolian source differently, more realistically, and more in the spirit of the early and backward ages to which it belongs. In the Shahnameh Rustam loses his horse and, seeking for the steed, wins the new bride. But in the Mongolian account the second wife appears on the scene ere this and so ill-treats the "brown wonder steed" that the poor animal is fain to escape. In fact the two wives of the hero give full vent to their jealousy in the Mongolian story, and the second wife gives him the draught of forgetfulness in order to make him neglect his first spouse. Doubtless in a cultured age like that of Firdausi such revelations of the domestic troubles of the hero would be considered highly unpoetical; and, by a new combination of elements, the story is made to look much more respectable. Other exploits of Rustam like the Seven labours and the combat with the "bronze-bodied hero" (Isfandiar) are also known to the saga of Bogda Gessar Khan.

### CHINESE LEGENDS.

But if the story of Sohrab is not unknown to the legends of Mongolia it is nowhere so well-developed as

in the Chinese epic Feng-Shen-Yen-I. In a paper which I read before the Asiatic Society of Bengal in the year 1930 I have shown the very interesting parallelisms between the legends of Rustam and Sohrab in the Persian epic and of Li Tsing and his son No-Cha in the Chinese accounts. The combat between the father and the son, the spiritual agency invoked by the father to overcome the son, the jewel given by the father to his infant son and the search of ambrosia for the mortally wounded son are to be found in both epics; only they are much better developed in the Chinese accounts-thanks to the labours of successive editors. The great differences that the Chinese epic ascribes to the son several exploits with which the Persian accounts credit the father. Thus in the Shahnameh the Seven labours are performed by Rustam but in the Chinese epic it is No-Cha who overcomes the seven demons of Mei-Shan. (cf. Grube's translation of the Feng-Shen-Yen-I p. 623). Indeed No-Cha occupies a higher place than his father in Chinese poems. To him is attributed the exploit of killing the dragon-king of the waters, an exploit which corresponds to the conquest of Gandarewa by Keresaspa. In fact the exploits atttibuted to Keresaspa, Rustam and Sohrab are all to be found in the Feng-Shen-Yen-I only more magnified and detailed—perhaps also more spiritualised under Taoist influences; but in the two epics the elemental factors of the stories are differently arranged, and the emphasis is different. With the Chinese writers No-Cha is the favourite and performs the greatest deeds, while she Shahnameh gives the lion's share of adventure and credit to Rustam.

Another interesting parallelism is to be found regarding the exploit of Rustam in overcoming the White Elephant in his early childhood. This motif of the child and the elephant is known to the Chinese account which the Red Child Devil overcomes the White Elephant. In fact this combat represents the struggle of the hot and cold elements, so that in this episode Rustam represents an elemental force. Perhaps also Rustam's Seven labours, like those of Hercules, have also a connection with the Solar myths. Indeed the Solar myth aspect is common to the epics of Persia, China, Babylonia and Greece. It might also be added, in this connection, that in my paper to which I have referred, I have tried to show that Akwan Dew with whom Rustam has a fight according to the Shahnamah is the same as the Chinese spirit Fei-lien, a wind-god.

### RUSSIAN AND BULGARIAN BALLADS.

The world-wide popularity and distribution of the Saga of Rustam is best illustrated by its many traces to be found in Slav countries like Russia and Bulgaria. This subject is well illustrated in learned article published by Dr. Wilhelm Wollner of Leipzig in the year 1894. Even before him the Russian savant Rovinskij had noticed in his work on "Russian popular portraits" (*Russkija narodnyja Kartinki*) that many episodes of the Rustam-saga could be found in Russian Folk-lore; and he also belived that Sharac, the name for the horse of Kraljevic Marko, the romantic hero of South Slavs—was obtained by an inversion of the word "Rakhsh". Dr. Wollner notices striking and note-

worthy resemblances between the physical features of the Rakhsh as described in the Shahnameh and those of Marko's famous steed as well as in the way in which the two heroes secure their horses. Above all the episode of Marko and his seen Janko is very similar to that of Rustam and Sohrab. The sojourn of Rustam in Samangan, his marriage with the daughter of the king of that land, the token given by him to his wife, Sohrab's discovery of his parentage, and the combat, all find their parallels in the poems about Marko and Janko.

Let us, in conclusion, attempt to trace the process of the apotheosis of Rustam—a process which is sure to prove most interesting to all students of epic and romance as a striking example of the accumulation of epic legends and honours round a historical person. Historically, Rustam was one of the great Parthian princes aad viceroys who ruled in the west of the Empire and almost claimed equal status with their sovereigns. He became a national hero of Seistan and the surrounding lands by his resistance to the Kushans and by his expeditions to Hyrcania to support the house of his sovereign Gotarzes. In his capacity as such a national hero the very ancient heroic legends of that land gathered round him. That was the first step in his apotheosis. The second stage was reached when, alongwith other Parthian heroes, he was admitted by the bards to the Round Table of Kai Khosrau. But still further honours awaited him on account of the exchange of legends that took place between Chinese epics and the Iranian epic of the Round Table of Kai

Khosrau. This epic synthesis gave a momentum to the legend of Rustam which was irresistible; and countries as far off as Russia and Bulgaria on one side, and Tibet and Mongolia on the other, have listened for centuries to the echoes of his fame. No other epic hero has commanded such a wide geographical range of fame—not even Achilles. For Achilles always remained a Greek and was regarded abroad as a foreigner; while the countries mentioned above adopted Rustam and made him their own though under other names.

The story of Rustam is an excellent illustration of the way in which epic and legendary material gathers round a historical nucleus. We have shown the historical Rustam as the defender of his country against the Kushans, and as one of the great line of Indo-Parthian princes a brave feudatory of Iran. Epic poetry has magnified his achievement by projecting him backward through time and gathering round him the exploits of several earlier heroes. The epic literature of neighbouring countries is also drawn upon in some measure to contribute to his apotheosis; Hence arose the glorious figure of the Achilles of the East–the very representative of the warlike spirit of Seistan first, and then of all Iran. That figure has dominated the Persian imagination for over a thousand years and must have been the mainspring of much that is great and brave in the annals of Iran.

# 9

# (AZI) DAHĀKA IN HISTORY AND LEGEND*

## The Legend of Dahaka.

History and Mythology have combined to give Dahaka a place of unusual prominence in the memory of mankind. Even as a historical personage he made his mark on the annals of Assyria, the history of Media and on Greek acccounts of Eastern History. But had he been celebrated only in history—as the ancestor of the royal line of Media—he would have been far less famous than now, and he would have been necessarily overshodowed by the founders of later royal houses which ruled over larger empires. He owes his sombre and tragic greatness to the fact that mythology surrounded him with a lurid and terrible halo. In appropriating him mythology exposed him to the execration of ages—to some extent undeservedly. But at the same time it gave him a terrible grandeur all his own. As will be shown he unites in himself the dragon legends of the East and of the West; as we shall show, he is identified with or bears the distinguishing features of the dragons Azi of the Avesta, Tiamat of Babylonia and Gorgons of the West. He is one of the central figures of the Apocalyptic literatures of Persia and of ancient Armenia. Both from the point of view of mythology and of history, the East and the West meet in him.

* Issued in the Journal and Proceedings, Asiatic Society of Bengal 6th January, 1933.

The main problems relating to the legend of Dahaka might be thus stated: In the first place we have the accounts of Deiokes by Herodotus and of Dahaka in Persian chronicles, and it can be shown that the points of agreement between them are more numerous than has been supposed. In the second place some account has to be given of the position of Dahaka as a point of union or junction of the dragon or snake legends of the East and the West. The third problem apppears to be the most difficult—how did it happen that the ancestor of the royal house of Media became the central of this cycles of dragon legends?

There is a fairly general consensus of opinions among historians as regards the identification of the Median King Deiokes described by Herodotus with the Median prince Dayaukku of the cuneiform texts (Huart- *Ancient Persia*, p. 30, Maspero, *Passing of the Empires*, 376). Thus Edural Meyer, Maspero and Justi, among others, argue for the identity of the two on the ground that the time whieh Herodotus assigns to Deiokes of the Medes is the same as that in which Sargon in his inscriptions speaks of having deported Daiaukku ("the lieutenant of Man" or "the Mannean Governor" Luckenbill, *Ancient Records of Assyria*, 11, 12 and 56). Those who question the identity of Deiokes and Dayakku are faced by the difficulty of conceiving two important parsonalities of the same name working in the same political field in the same decade, and of accounting for the total silence of the inscriptions regarding one of them. The first mention of Dayaukku by Sargon was in 715 B.C. Later, again

in 713 B.C. Sargon speaks of his district as Bit Daiaukki—"the house of Dewkis" (Luckenbill, 11, 23). This coincidence of time and, it might be added, of exploit has established in the opinion of eminent historians the identity of Deiokes (of Herodotus) and Dayaukku of the inscriptions. In Sargon's inscriptions we find the Iranian tribes of North-Western Iran divided politically. We read of princes like Iranzu ruling over the Mannai who were very loyal to Assyria (Goodspeed, *History of Babylonia and Assyrians*, p. 251), while there were other princes who acted at the instigation of the ruler of Urartu which was the rival of Assyria. We also find the Medes pressing west and absorbing the tribes there. But, shortly after, we find all this political and tribal confusion disappearing; and while part of this political consolidation is no doubt due to the efforts of Assyrian Kings to build up a buffer kingdom against Urartu, (Good-speed *op, cit.*, p. 251) yet much of the merit is due very probably to Dayaukku whose work was as Maspero says "to create a central rallying point for the Median tribes arround which they henceforth grouped themselves". Such a consolidation was no doubt the work of a great political personality, and it was the more creditable to Deiokes since, according to the Sargon inscriptions, he began his career as a petty prince of the Mannai. It is also very probable that he avowedly appealed to Median and Mannai tribes in the cause of political unity, since the very name of his capital Ecbatana (Hangmatana) refers to the idea of political unity, as has been translated as "the meeting place of the tribes" (cf.

Rawlinson, *Five Great Monarchies*, Vol. p. 103, Maspero, *Passing of Empires*, p. 325). It is true that he began his career by conspring against local rulers like Ullusunu, but he seems to have ended by uniting the tribes and bringing about a national cohesion (cf. *Cambridge Ancient Hist.*, III, 51–52). He ruled long enough to give the Medians the unaccustomed luxury of half a century of comparative peace, and there were in his days none of those disastrous wars either with Assyria or with the Scythians of which both his predecessors and his successors had their full share. Tradition has done him justice in this respect, for in the Dinkard (Book IX, Chap. 21, ss, 18) the people of Northern Persia are said to have addressed Feridun thus: "why did'st thou smite Azi-Dahak, who was a good ruler as to prerogative so that danger was kept away by him, and an inquisitor from him protected this region from those of the Mazendaran country?" It is obvious that here, as in some other places, by "those of the Mazendaran country" are meant the Scythians; for, as Dr. West has noted, Mazendaran was considered to be out of the Khvaniras continent.

It is not difficult again to identify the Dahak of the Persian chronicles with Deiokes the first king of Media. Indeed the correspondence between the account given by Herodotus of Deiokes and the description of the career of Dahaka given by Firdausi and others is under the circumstances striking and interesting. To take one example: According to Herodotus, Deiokes was the first king of the Medes and it was he who "collected the Medes into one nation, over which he

ruled" (I. 101). Now, Firdausi no doubt begins his Shahnameh with the reigns of legendary kings like Gayumarth and other mythical kings. But in one rather neglected corner of his extensive epic he clearly asserts that kingship began in Persia with Dahaka. When narrating the reign of Khosru Parwiz, Firdausi describes the origin of "the ancient throne" (تخت طاق دیس) of Persia, and there the poet asserts that the origin of that throne was in the age of Dahaka:

مایهٔ ان ز ضحاک بود  که نا پارسا بود و ناپاک بود

("The beginning of that Throne was made by Dahaka who was impious and wicked"). There is also the significant statement that this old throne was constructed in Mount Damawand which is so closely associated with the fate of Dahak:—

یکی مرد بد درد ماوند کوه  که شاهش جدا داشتی از گروه
کجا جهن بر زین بدی نام اوی  رسیدهٔ بهر کشوری کام اوی
یکی نامور شاه را تخت ساخت  گهر بر گهر کرد او بر نشاخت

("There was a man in Mount Damawand whom the king kept apart from others. His name was Jehn Burzin and his success were celebrated in many lands. He constructed a noble throne for the king which was inlaid with great numbers of jewels").

Firdausi also refers to the great fort and palace of Dahaka which is described by Herodotus. It was so lofty and splendid according to the poet that Feridun saw its dazzling splendour from a great distance.

ز یک میل کرد افریدون نگاه — یکی کاخ دید اندرون شهر شاه
که ایوانش بر ترز کیوان نمود — تو گفتی ستاره بخواهد ربود
بدانست کان خانهٔ اژدها ست — که جای بزرگی و جای مهاست

فروزنده چون مشتری بر سپهر — همه جای شادی و آرام و مهر
طلسمیکه ضحاک سازیده بود — سرش بآسمان بر فرازیده بود

(From the distance of a mile Feridun beheld a palace in the royal city which was loftier than Saturn; such that you would say, it would seize the stars. Feridun knew it to be the palace of the Dragon and the seat of greatness. It was the abode of joy, comfort and love and it shone like Jupiter in the heavens—that was the talisman which Dahaka had made and exalted to the skies). Here Firdausi well represents the feeling of astonishment and terror which must have been excited in the Median and Mannai tribesmen as they looked at the fortress and palace of their new sovereign. But an even more picturesque and short description of it is to be found in the Dinkard where the fort is called "the golden cage which was completely impregnable." (Book IX, Chap. 21, verse 13). This is a very accurate description indeed of the gilded and painted battlements of the fort at Ecbatana (cf. Herodotus, I, 98–99).

The fort and palace of Deiokes stood on a spur of Mt. Orontes and this hilly position no doubt contributed greatly to the strength of the fort. To this Mountain Orontes—called by Persians Arwand or الوند (Alwand) there are references both in the Arabic and Persian chronicles—Thus Alberuni styles Dahak, Baiwarasp son of Arwandasp (Justi, p. 61); while Firdausi represents Arwand as an important stage in the march of his

rival Feridun; but by a pardonable mistake believes that the name Arwand referred, not to the Mountain Orontes but to the river of the same name.

بیا روند رود اندر آورد روی  چنان چون بود مرد دیهیم جوی
اگر پهلوانی ندانی زبان  بتازی تو اروند را دجله خوان

("He marched towards the river Arwand as befitted one who sought the crown. If you do not know Pahlavi, understand that Arwand means the Tigris"). By a singular coincidence the name Orontes occurs twice in the history of Deiokes. In the first place the great fort and palace which he built as a King stood near Mt. Orontes. But, in the second place, Hamath where Deiokes (Dayaukku) and his family were settled in exile by Sargon, was also situated on the river Orontes. Hence the name Arwand (Orontes) mentioned by Firdausi in the episode of Dahak is shown to have a double historical connection with the latter's history.

Generally speaking, the eastern historians merge in their account of Dahak of the reigns of Deiokes and Astyages. The conjecture of Darmesteter that the name Dahaka refers to a dynasty is thus in a sense correct; he was, however, not right in imagining that the dynasty was a foreign, and probably a Semitic, one. As a matter of fact it was the Median Dynasty and only the first and the last portions of it that was represented by Dahaka. The chronicles combine in one the glories of the reign of Deiokes and the crimes, cruelties and captivity of Astyages.

It is a historical curiosity that the title of Bæwar-aspa which is so often given to Dahaka was used as a

proper name ("Baiorospos") of an official in the Tanais, on the Northern shores of the Black Sea about the year 220 A.D. (see Justi, *Namenbuch*, p. 61, quoting from Latyschev, II, 237). This shows, on the one hand that Dahaka's name and history were known not only in Persia and Armenia but also in far northern latitudes. One can also infer that his reputation in those regions was not so evil as it was in Persian chronicles. We are reminded here of the statement of Eduard Meyer that the Median Dynasts of the house of Dahak had friendly relations and alliances with the people of Scythia. The Dinkard also mentions the fact that the predatory races of the north were favourably inclined to Dahaka and called him "the good sovereign of both demons and men" (Dinkard, Book IX, Chap. 21, verse. 21).

### DAHAKA IN THE LEGENDS.

Few historical personages have gathered round themselves legends from such diverse quarters as Dahaka. The legendary genealogy of Dahaka given in the Bundehesh shows striking affinities to the Hellenic legends of Gorgon family. The fall of Dahaka at the hands of Feridun finds a parallel in tbe great struggle between Bel-Marduk and Tiamat; and even some of the details of the Iranian and the Babylonian narratives are strikingly similar. It need hardly be said that Azi Dahaka was identified with the demon Azi of the Avesta. Envisaged in this way the legend of Dahaka becomes a striking example of the international transmission and inter-relation of myths. If ever comparative mythology comes to be taught like the science of law through the medium of "leading

cases", the legend of Dahaka will form one of the most important and most instructive of such "leading cases".

### (1) Azi Dahaka in the Avesta Demonology.

Ancient Persia possessed picturesque dragon-legends, like other countries of antiquity—Egypt and Babylonia, India and China. The cult of the fight between Ahi (or Vritra) and Indra was widely spread among the Indo-Aryans. But while in other countries, like India, the dragon was the symbol of drought and of darkness (and while in China and Babylonia it also represented destructive floods), in Persia it also symbolised moral evils. From the list of demons which we possess in the Ardibehisht Yasht the great importance of the "dragons' or snakes' brood" (Azichithra) in the demonology of the Avesta (Yasht III, 8, 10, 15). Among the legendary and monstrous forms of the dragon (Azi) two were specially noted in the Avesta—the Azi Srvara ("the horned dragon") and Azi Dahaka—a monster with three heads and six eyes, (Yasht 9, 8). Thus the Avesta had a developed dragon mythology; and the mythological traits were easily transferred to a historical personage who happened to be sufficiently well hated and whose name sounded similar to that of Azi Dahaka.

### (2) Resemblance between the Legend of Dahaka and that of the Gorgon.

From the point of view of comparative mythology a great deal of interest attaches to the legendary genealogical table of Dahaka preserved for us in the Bundehesh. In fact that genealogy suggests that,

mythologically, Dahaka was cusiously allied to the family of the Gorgons, the Graeae and others descended from Phorkus or Phorcys (a sort of "old man of the sea")—a family which has been immortalised in classical legends. The very names in the two genealogies, the Greek and the Iranian, are highly suggestive of the close parallelism. We remember that, according to the Bundehesh, Dahaka was descended from Fravak (a semi-human personage) through Taz (Bund, XXXI, 6-7) at the same time, the Shahnameh informs us that Dahaka had a grandson named Gurgoe or Gorgoe—a dreadful warrior who measured swords with both king Minuchihr and the hero Kereshasp. This genealogy is very reminiscent of the line of Phorcys or Phorcus who was the father of Thoosa. By his sister Ceto Phorcys became also the father of serpentine beings—the Gorgons and the Hesperian dragon, among others. The close resemblance of the names Fravak and Phorcus, Thoosa and Taz, Gorgon and Gurgoe is obvious. It is a curiosity of comparative mythology, when we consider the serpentine character of both genealogies.

The analogy can be traced not only as between the names of the houses of Fravak and of Phorcus but between the legendary characteristics of the mythical beings included in them. Phorcus or Phorcys has been described for us as a sort of "old man of the sea", descended from Neptune and Gea. In fact Phorcus was a semi-human being and the ancestor of Thoosa as well as of serpentine offspring like the Gorgos (especially the dreadful Medusa) and of the Hesperian dragon. By Hecate he became the father of another semi-human

terror,—Scylla. The mythological characteristics of Fravak are not dissimilar. Bundehesh, XV, 31 informs us that while there were ten varieties of men, fifteen races of semi-human monsters owed their origin to Fravak. Thus, like Phorkys, Fravak was the ancestor of half-human and terrible mythological beings. The next in descent from Phorkus was, according to Hellenic legends, Thoosa; according to the Bundehesh, Taz was the successor of Fravak. It is to be noted that the genealogy comprising Fravak, Taz and Dahak is to be found not only in the Bundehesh but also in authorities like Tapari, Alberuni, Ibn Athir and Hamzah.

The analogy between Dahaka and the Gorgon family might be pressed further. Both Dahaka and the Gorgon Medusa were handsome and well-beloved personalities in the early part of their careers. It was on account of the sinful conduct of the Gorgon that Athena's curse transformed her into a terrible object with snakes on her head. Similarly, we read in the Shahnameh that Dahaka was tempted by the Eblis to commit various crimes, and then the latter rewarded the prince for his aptness in crime by endowing him with two snakes on his shoulders. Nor should we forget that in the Shahnameh we read of the exploits of Gurgoe—a granson of Dahak—who fought on the side of Salm against king Minuchihr (cf. the Shahnameh 1, 298, 1057; Justi, *Namenbneh*, p. 122). In some editions of the Shahnameh the name of this warrior is given as Kakui, but as Justi has observed Gurgoe is the better reading (Justi, *Namenbuch*, p.

152). The Tradition relating to this Gurgoe, grandson of Dahak, must have been a strong one, for there are two versions of it in the Shahnameh. In one version he fights king Minuchihr and is overthrown by the king with great difficulty. According to the second version, it is Sâm who has the honour of vanquishing Gurgoe after a fierce battle.

As we have seen, both the Bundehesh and the Greek mythology preserve legends about monstrous races which once existed by the side of the human race. The Greek myths associate such races with the ocean, and generally they either arose out of the ocean or lived in islands. Such were the Graeae, the dragon of Hesperides and Phorcys himself who was the offspring of Neptune and Gea. But it is the Babylonian mythology which is richest in this sphere. The legends of Babylonia tell us most about "the abyss of water wherein resided most hideous beings, which were produced of a two-fold principle. Men appeared with two wings, some with four and with two faces...Other human figures were to be seen with the legs and horns of goats. Some had horses' feet: others had the limbs of a horse behind. Bulls likewise bred there with the heads of men" (cf. Alexander the Polyhistor). We are here reminded of the Bundehesh account of the various races of the earth and water. We shall also see that it is in the Babylonian myths that we shall find the best analogies of the Dahaka legend.

(3) THE INFLUENCE OF THE MARDUK-TIAMAT LEGEND

Thus while the parallel between the legends concerning Dahaka and those of the Gorgons is most

interesting in these days of Western culture, it was the myth of Bel-Marduk which, originating from Mesopotamia had the most important formative influence on the Dahak myth of Iran. We need hardly emphasise the importance of the influence of the Bel-Marduk story on the mythology of several nations. As Dr. Max Müller, of the University of Pennsylvania, has observed "after 2500 B.C., the Asiatic myth of the combat between the god of heaven and light (Bel-Marduk) and the abysmal dragon of the ocean (Tiamat) penetrated into Egypt, where it gave rise to the story of the gigantic serpent 'Apop' the enemy of the sun-god" (Max Müller, *Egyptian Mythology*, p. 104). The great Babylonian myth has influenced various books of the Bible (the Revelation, the Book of Esther and the Apocalypse of Baruch); it has also influenced the thoughts of the Gnostics and other sects. It can easily be imagined that the cosmology of the Babylonians, embodied in a fine "epic of creation" was even more likely to impress the imagination of the Median tribes. Indeed, it would appeal even more to them, partly because it was based on the dualistic idea which was inherent in all Iranian thought. Again, like the Gorgon cycle of the West to which we have referred, and also like the Fravak legends of Iran to which the Bundehesh refers, it gratified the human imagination by furnishing accounts of an age when side by side with early man there flourished strange monsters, hybrid formations, half-man, half-animal" (cf. Jastrow, *The Religion of Babylonia and Assyria*, p. 419).

Just as in the Shahnameh, the Eblis prepares Dahaka in order to be the scourge of mankind and as

in the Avesta the Angra Mainyush forms Azi Dahaka ass the great Druj for harming the world, so Tiamat created a certain number of associated monstrous character and appearance in order to carry on the strife with the gods, The description given in the Babylonian epic of the nature and appearance of these monsters is reminiscent of Firdausi's epic as well as of the Avesta accounts. These demons, as the Babylonian epic says, were:

"Strong warriors, creating great serpents,
Sharp of tooth, merciless in attack.
With poison in place of blood, she filled
their bodies
Furious vipers she clothed with terror,
Filled them out with awful splendour,
Made them of high stature
That their contenance might inspire
terror and rouse horror
Their bodies inflated, their attack irresistible
She set up basilisks, great serpents and monsters
A great monster, a mad dog, a scorpion-man,
A raging monster, a fish man, a great bull
Carrying merciless weapons, not dreading battle".

The last verses refer to the chief of these monsters Kingu (Jastrow, *op. cit.*, p. 420) who worthily represents the Azi Dahak of the Iranian legends. In the Avesta as well as in the Shahnameh the Evil Powers find their great champion in Dahaka—so also in the Babylonian epic:

"She (Tiamat) has exalted Kingu; in their midst
she has raised him to power
To march before the forces, to lead the host,

To give the battle-signal, to advance to the attack
To direct the battle, to control the fight,
To him she has entrusted".

(King, *Babylonian Religion*, p. 65.)

Much time elapsed before the gods could find a champion who was willing to face this serpentine terror. That is why the Iranian Epic and legends, too, have to assign a long reign to the wicked Azi Dahaka. At last the Babylonian gods found a hero Marduk who undertook to "become your avenger, binding Tiamat".

Let us now come to a few characteristics and attributes of the hero Feridun in the Shahnameh and see how they fit into the Babylonian legend of Marduk and Tiamat. In the Shahnameh, the avenging hero Feridun had for his foster-mother a cow ("Pur Maya"). That Feridun was a "bull" hero is shown not only by his bearing a bull-headed mace ("Gurz-i-Gaw-Sar") but by the fact that his brother Barmayun was a male ox (Dinkard, Book 9, Chap. 21, verse 22) while his father was Aspiyan-Tora (Bundehesh, XXXI, 7). This idea is not wanting to the legends of the solar heroes of Babylonia and Egypt. Thus in Egypt among the symbols of birth of the sun-god Osiris the Cow is a prominent one (Max Müller, *op. cit.*, p. 71); and in the Babylonian legends Marduk figures as sun-god as well (King, *Legends of Babylonia and Egypt*, p. 129) while he is connected with the Egyptian Osiris through his name "Asari". In fact, Marduk or Amuruduk probably signifies the "young steer of the day" (Spence, p. 202). Finally the banner of Marduk or Asshur bore

no less than three bulls. Thus both Marduk and Feridun were "bull spirits".

Then again, according to the Shahnameh, the hero Feridun has for his chosen weapon the bull-headed mace (گرزهٔ گاوسر) with which he overcomes Dahaka. The mace is also the favourite weapon of Marduk who, according to the Babylonian epic "with his club unswung smote the skull" of Tiamat (Sayce, *Hibbert lectures*, p. 383) and "broke it". Similarly we read of Feridun in the Shahnameh that

بدان گرزهٔ گاو سر دست برد  بزد بر سرش ترک او کرد خورد

"he seized the bull-headed mace with his hand and smote with it the skull of Dahaka which became shattered". And as regards the "bull's-head", that too is connected with the tale of Marduk. For, "the rôle played by Marduk in the Babylonian version of creation has been borrowed from Enlil of Nippur"; and Enlil was "the bull of goring horns..... Enlil the bull" the god of fertility as well as of battle (King, *Legends of Babylonia and Egypt*, p. 109; Langdon's *Sumerian and Babylonian Psalms*, pp. 199; D. Mackenzie, *Myths of Babylonia*, p. 159). It might be added that good authorities believe that Marduk was very likely a bull-god" (Spence, *Myths of Babylonia and Assyria*, 93) and "in early astronomical literature we find him alluded to as the bull of light". Indeed the probable meaning of the name Marduk or A-maruduk was "the young steer of day" (Spence, 202). Thus the Babylonian legends fully account for the bull-mace as well as for the cow foster-mother of Feridun.

There are other important attributes which were common to Marduk and Feridun. Like Feridun who possessed the Khwareh (or glory) "a light burned on the head of Merodach and he was clad in a robe of terror" (D. Mackenzie. 145). But the resemblances do not stop here. The name of Marduk was "perhaps most frequently used to carry destruction into the ranks of the demon army" (Spence, 263). In fact, it was a word of power" to defeat and scatter the hordes of evil things that surrounded and harassed mankind". Just so, in the *Vanant Yasht*, the name of Feridun was used as a word of power against evil spirits. Finally, we note that according to the Shahnameh, Feridun entered the battle in order to avenge his father. So also we read about Marduk that

"Before his fathers as counsellor he took his place" and these fathers (the gods) thus addressed him:
"O Marduk, thou art our avenger".

(King, *Babylonian Religion*, 68–69).

If once experts in Iranian archæology became convinced of the close analogy between the legends of Marduk and Feridun the way might be opened for a reconsideration of the origins of the famous "Gawiani" standard. It will be remembered that Marduk was a bull-god and that he was identified with the god Asshur (Spence, *op. cit.*, 94). It is obvious why Asshur was symbolised and represented by a military standard consisting of a pole on which there was a disc whereon the god was depicted as an archer or strong warrior standing between two bulls (Spence, p. 208). Between the disc and the top

of the pole was again a large bull's head with horns outspread. In fact the symbol had a triple representation of the bull on it and was a true "bull-banner" (Darafash Gawiani) in every sense of the word. When we remember that the first Median king (Deiokes) imitated Assyrian architecture and court-etiquette in his country, there would be nothing surprising in Media's adopting the Assyrian military symbol in at least a modified form. And, indeed, ancient tradition, as embodied in the Shahnameh does associate both the old Iranian banner (Darafash-i-Gawiani) as well as the throne with the age of Dahak. If the banner of Asshur and Marduk corresponds in its details to the Gawiani banner of Feridun that fact might not be a merely accidental affair.

### THE BABYLONIAN GOD "GAGA" AND THE PERSIAN HERO "GAWEH"

Before Marduk begins his fight with Kingu and Tiamat, the god Anshur sent his minister Gaga, to summon a council of the gods and to carry the tidings of the revolt of Tiamat. In fact it is the message of Gaga which decided the gods to declare against Tiamat. Perhaps, it is not a mere coincidence that the name of Gaga is very similar indeed to that of the hero Gaweth who interviewed and defied Dahak and then brought powerful succour to Feridun. But in the Iranian legend the hero Gaweh is a far bolder person than his Babylonian prototype, and defies the tyrant Dahak to his face. On the other hand Gaga is afraid of the tyrannical Tiamat and her crew, and only ventures to send in his message through the hands of others.

Perhaps some of this abnormal courage shown by Gaweh in the Persian epic should be ascribed to Firdausi himself. That poet not only signalised himself by defying the tyrant of Ghazni, but never misses a chance of making his heroes defy kings. But in the present case, Firdausi's account of Gaweh's courage is borne out by the Sad Dar (Chapter 62, section 5; cf. West, *Pahlavi Texts*, part III, p. 323). Putting this aspect of the narrative aside, the roles of Gaga and Gaweh in the two episodes are similar and consist in securing assistance—in the one case divine, in the other case human—for Marduk and Feridun respectively.

### Firdausi's "Armael and Karmael", and the Babylonian "Anshar and Kishar"

The curious sub-episode of Armael and Karmael as narrated by Firdausi (in the course of his legend of Dahaka) has claims to our special consideration. According to the poet these beneficent persons managed to save a number of possible victims from the clutches of Dahaka; and it was from the persons thus rescued that, as the poet informs us, the Kurds were descended. The names Armael and Karmael were obviously either borrowed from the Babylonians or were meant to be good enough imitations of Babylonian names. Thus in the Bible the names Adrammelech and Sharezer (II. Kings, 19; 37) are introduced as passable imitations of Assyrian names.

It is submitted here similarly that by Armael and Karmael were really meant the gods Anshar and Kishar who, according to the Babylonian legends had a great part in foiling the designs of the evil-being

Tiamat and in helping forward the enterprise of Marduk. Further, it was the primeval god Anshar and his spouse Kishar who strove to reconcile Tiamat and her following to the high gods and did their best "so that her anger may subside and her heart be made merciful" (Mackenzie, *Myths of Babylonia*, p. 142). As in the Persian epic the beneficent beings Armael and Karmael do their best to moderate the tyranny of Dahak, so in the Babylonian legend Anshar and Kishar try to reconcile the monster Tiamat to the orderly and ethical ways of the gods. Thus Anshar sent both his son Anu and the god Ea to try to appease Tiamat's anger, but the results of these efforts proved dissappointing (King, *Babylonian Religion*, p. 63).

It need hardly be said that the outcome of the combat between Marduk and Tiamat was very similar to the event of the fight between Feridun and Dahaka. In the Shahnameh, Dahaka is represented as putting up no great fight against Feridun though he made a vain effort to assassinate the latter; and on the failure of this attempt Dahak was taken prisoner. So in the Babylonian poem:

"As (Marduk) gazed, (Kingu) was troubled in his gait,

"His will was destroyed and his movements ceased

* * * *

"They took to flight to save their lives;

"In an enclosure they were caught, they were not able to escape.

"He took them captive, he broke their weapons

"In the net they were caught and in the snare they sat down."

(King, *Babylonian Religion*, pp. 73 and 75).

In the case of Tiamat also the struggle was but brief and she was caught in the net of Marduk:—

"She was like one possessed, she lost her senses,
"She uttered loud, angry cries
"She trembled and shook to her very foundations
"The lord spread out his net to catch her".

(King, *Babylonian Religion*, p. 73).

Later, we find Marduk splitting Tiamat up into two halves and

"One half of her he set in a place as a covering for the heavens
He fixed a bolt" (*Ib.*, 77).

The procedure is very similar in the Shahnameh; only in the case Feridun is made to use a lasso instead of a net to capture Dahak. The latter is taken bound by the lasso to the lofty mountain Damawand to which he is bound by heavy nails. The scheme of tying Dahaka to a lofty mountain by nails resembles, in the main, the idea of tying up Tiamat to the sky by a bolt.

In the Shahnameh, *Dahaka is represented as having two snakes or dragons*—one on each shoulder. This notion of two serpents recurs in the Babylonian pantheon. Thus, the demon Labartu is described as holding a serpent in each hand (cf. Jastrow's Religious Belief in Babylonia and Assyria, p. 308, plate 25). Again in the same work of Jastrow we find in plate 4

(p. 14) two serpents wound round a ceremonial staff. Finally it is to be noted that the dragon was a symbol of Marduk himself.

It does not necessarily follow from the above argument that the Iranian legend of Feridun and Dahaka is only the counterpart of a Semitic myth (that of Bel-Marduk and the dragon) or that it is, therefore, of a Semitic origin. For high authorities like Dr. King believe that the Babylonian dragon myth was evolved originally by the Sumerians, who were a Non-Semitic race who occupied the land of Babylonia many centuries before the Semites entered it (King, *Babylonian Religion*, pp. 2–3; King, *Legends of Babylon and Egypt*, p. 119 note). In particular, it is believed that Kingu was a personage of Sumerian mythology (*Ib.*, p. 118). As Dr. King has observed "the very names borne by Tiamat's brood of monsters in the Seven Tablets are stamped in most cases with their Sumerian descent, and Kingu, whom she appointed as her champion in place of Apsu, is equally Sumerian". The ultimate and real origin of the legends of Feridun and Marduk might therefore well be a very early Iranian myth. In this connection it might be noted that in the Bhandarkar commemoration volume the late Mr. B. G. Tilak has drawn attention to the analogy of certain Vedic myths about Indra and Vritra to the Bel-Marduk legends.

### CONNECTION BETWEEN THE HISTORY OF DAHAKA AND THE DRAGON-LEGENDS

Having thus given a brief account of the various dragon legends of the East and the West which left

their traces on the story of Dahaka we come to what is perhaps the most interesting problem in our thesis. How was it that the first king of Media happened to become the centre of a unique mass of dragon legends? In attempting to suggest an answer to the problem it will be shown that some of the intense unpopularity which is implied in the legends was due to the policy of Dahaka; but that far the greater part of the odium was incurred by the ferocius behaviour of his grandson Astyages whose sins were visited on the memory of his grandfather Deiokes. It might also be added that not a little of the terrible associations of the age of Dahaka was due to the havoc wrought in that age by the great Scythian invasion which devastated not only Iran but Assyria, Syria, and Palestine. For there are historical reasons for holding the policy of the Median dynasty to be at least partly responsible for the Scythian incursion.

Considering the position which he occupied and the policy which he had to pursue, Deiokes (Dahaka) could not possibly have escaped a great deal of opprobrium. To weld together a congeries of tribes in a country like Persia—where the tribesmen have highly individualistic ideas—was a task only for a hardhanded man. The task of Deiokes (Dahaka) was the harder in those days, in that these tribes were not quite homogeneous; there were under him the Medes and the Mannai of Atropatene (Huart, 28) and possibly Armenian and even Scythian elements. The Bundehesh (XX, 23) also refers to Atropatene as the scene of his activities. A very good modern analogy for the

task before Deiokes would be the work which Nadirshah did in the way of bringing under his firm rule the various tribes of Persia before he aspired to royalty. In carrying out his object Nadirshah had to fight numerous battles, inflict punishments on thousands, and had to transplant and expropriate a large number of tribes. From the hatred felt for Nadirshah we can judge of the feelings roused by Deiokes.

His imitation of the Assyrian court-etiquette and of the magnificent architecture of the Assyrian and Babylonian princes must have contributed considerably to his unpopularity (Huart, *Ancient Persia*, p. 29-30). It is possible that Deiokes acquired these ideas during his exile at Hamath (*ib.*, 28). The fort at Ecbatana with its seven concentric walls built by Deiokes and described by Herodotus (I, 98-99) was certainly necessary for royal security; but the gilded, plated and painted battlements were mere costly luxuries which the Median nation must have paid for with some difficulty. When reading the account given by Herodotus of the splendid fort and city of Deiokes, of the magnificent public works, one is reminded of the great architectural activities of King Solomn and of the heavy financial burdens which they necessitated.

Discontent must also have been engendered by the punctilious court-etiquette and ceremonial which was instituted by Deiokes. Though useful in some respects, these ordinances must have appeared as an "introduction of violent tyranny and of most arbitrary power." One reason why Dahaka and his dynasty were called "Babylonian" in the Avesta was no doubt the

imitation of Assyrian etiquette and architecture and his policy of keeping well with Assyria. This policy of good relations with Assyria was also maintained for a time by his son Phraortes (Huart, 30); and that prudent policy was later abandoned by that son with disastrous results. But the alliance which their successors Cyaxares and Astyages maintained with Babylon must have soon furnished an additional reason for the apellation "Babylonian" as applied to Deiokes and his line.

It has been alleged both in the Shahnameh and in the Dinkard (Book IX, Chap. 21, s. 12–13) that Dahaka was too fond of adding choice beauties to his seraglio. It is not improbable that the Median monarchy lost no time in imitating the polygamous practices of the earlier royal lines of the East.

In any case the discontent excited by the policy and measures of Deiokes himself was not excessive, as we can infer from his long reign of 53 years. The cessation of Assyrian raids was, his subjects must have felt, some compensation at any rate for the new tyranny. It was the ferocious oppression and conduct of his grandson Astyages and the loss of Median independence owing to the misconduct of the latter which brought the dynasty into great disrepute with the Medes; and this disrepute was reflected on Deiokes who was the founder of the line. The cruelty with which Astyages treated nobles like Harpagos and his ferocious treatment of the Magi and others have been narrated by Herodotus (I, 119 and 128). The father of history has also informed us of the hatred entertained towards Astyages

by the Medes for his being the cause of the loss of their empire and independence (I, 130).

From Armenian history we can gather accounts which show that it was owing to the ferocious character of Astyages that his descendants were called "Dragons." Thus, Father Chamich observes that Ahasuerus, king of Media—who was at war with Cyrus—also invaded Armenia. Ahasuerus was, however, defeated and his wives and children were taken prisoners by the Armenians and were settled in Armenia. "The descendants of these women, proceeding from the king of Media, were thence-forward called the offspring of Ajdahak or the Dragon, in allusion to the name of Ahasuerus, which, in the Armenian language, signifies a dragon" (Father Chamich, *History of Armenia*, Vol. I, pp. 41 and 43). We note also that the only king of Media who fought Cyrus was Astyages. It is very likely the names of Astyages (pronounced as Ashdahak by the Armenians) suggested identification with the Avesta name Azi Dahaka, and this similarity of names was turned to account by contemporary hatred and malice. It has also been conjectured that the name "Mar" by which the Armenians knew the Medians also helped to associate the idea of "dragons" with the dynasty of Deiokes, since the word "Mar" also means a snake (Justi, *Namenbuch*, p. 47). This testimony of Armenian history is valuable in two ways. It definitely connects with Astyages the epithet of "Dragon" which he probably deserved by his cruel behaviour. It is also interesting to discover that some at least of his descendants were branded by history or at least by tradition with the same opprobrious epithet.

It is obvious that the Persian legend about Dahaka being confined and chained in the mountains, where he is trying to snap his chains and whence he will break loose in the last days, was well known to the Armenians. These, however, have transferred the legend from Dahaka to a wicked king of Armenia called Artavazd who ruled about 130 A. D. The Armenians believed, says Father Chamich, "that he still existed but in a cell, and confined with chains of iron. Near him, it was also said, were two dogs, continually gnawing his fetters for the purpose of releasing him; in the event of which, it was predicted that he would conquer the world. But, so the story went, these chains were continually strengthened by the strokes of blacksmiths' hammers. Even to the time of Chorenensis, the belief in this fable was so strong in the minds of the ignorant blacksmiths, that they were accustomed, on Sundays, to give three or four blows with their hammers on their anvils "so that the captive might not get loose during their cessation from work". (Chamich, *History of Armenia*, vol. I, pp. 146–147). Obviously, here is the Iranian legend of Dahaka's fate passed on to a well-hated Armenian prince. It is also interesting to note that it was a blacksmith (Gaweh) who according to the Shahnameh, helped to bring about the downfall af king Dahak. It might well be that the identification of the line of Deiokes with the dragons was initiated in Armenia and was taken up in Persia later.

No doubt we are here on the track of the cycle of legends allied to that of Loki who will some day "burst his triple chain"; but there were special circumstances

relating to the fall of the dynasty of Deiokes to which such legends could be attached and fitted. We remember that when Astyages was defeated by Cyrus the former was sent in chains to the regions of Hyrcania. The Medes, however, who hated Astyages for his cruelty of temper (Herodotus I, 130) would naturally be apprehensive that some day he would return from his banishment to play the tyrant once more. The legends which we have related mark their anxiety in this respect.

But besides the ferocious deeds of Astyages, there were other circumstances relating to the dynasty of Deiokes which seemed to qualify him for the place which he occupied in the Apocalyptic literature of Iran and Armenia. It was under his dynasty that the most terrible invasion of the Scythians recorded in history took place. It swept over Assyria, Media, Armenia, Syria, and Palestine and reached Egypt where Psammetichus fought the terrible invaders off. The peoples of these regions must have been convinced at the time by the fearful happenings that the end of the world had indeed come. The religious literatures of three several religions bear witness to this general feeling. The Iranian traditions came to associate the dynasty then ruling with the end of the world: Jeremiah's Scythian songs and the writings of Ezekiel and Habakkuk bear witness to their terrible memory in the Old Testament. Through the Gog and Magog mentioned by Ezekiel the Scythian hordes appear also in Muhammadan accounts of the last day of the world as Yajuj and Majuj. It was with these terrible happenings which have

symbolised the end of the world for over two thousand years that the house of Deiokes was associated.

It is also quite probable that the Scythian incursion was in a sense to be attributed directly to the policy of Deiokes and his house. As Eduard Meyer has observed, the Median dynasty had been in the habit of allying themselves with the Cimmerian tribes and chieftains in order to strengthen themselves against Assyria. That was of course a dangerous game to play; since Scythian tribes once induced to enter Iran and Mesopotamia as the allies of Media might take up the game in their own interests. In this way some of the hatred felt for the Scythians might be with some justice transferred to Deiokes and his dynasty.

### Contrasted treatment of Dahaka and Huwakhshatara in the Apocalyptic literature of Iran

Once Dahaka was identified with the dragon he was sure to play a leading part in the Iranian Apocalypse; for the unchaining of a great dragon or fiend was an essential element in the Apocalyptic scheme of a great many nations—Babylonian, Iranian, Hebrew, and Scandinavian, among others. Even nearer to the Dahaka legend in this respect—and very likely not uninfluenced by it—is the account in the Syriac Apocalypse of Ezra: "Let these four kings be loosed which are bound near the great river Euphrates which shall destroy a third part of mankind". So also in the book of Revelation we read of "the four angels loosed which were prepared for to slay the third part of men". It is not a far cry from the kings imprisoned

on the Euphrates to the king imprisoned on Mount Damawand.

But it is even more interesting to contrast the very different treatment meted out by the apocalyptic legends of Iran to two Median kings—Dahaka and Huwakhshatara (Cyaxares). While the more ignoble part in the Iranian Apocalypse has been assigned to the hated Dahaka on account of his own faults or those of his successors, Huwakhshatara has been made one of the great heroes of the Apocalypse. For he was undoubtedly regarded as a popular hero by the Medians, who remembered with pride his glorious victories over the Assyrians and Scythians.

I venture to suggest that in the name and exploits of the hero Hushidar (who is to begin the task of saving and renewing the world), we have a reference to the name, career, and successes of the Median King Huwakhshatara; and that the personality and exploits of the latter have been superimposed upon those of the old Saviours, Astwad-ereta or Astvaturta (as the name is read by Lommel). In fact the personality of Hushidar is in the main the personality of the historical Huwakhshatara projected into the remote future. Just as one great Median king—Dahaka—has been put forward as the champion of evil, so the most popular of the Median line—Huwakhshatara—is made to represent the good side. All this, I submit, proves the influence of the Median historical reminiscence on the development of the religious tradition of Iran. I beg to submit the following grounds for the identification which I propose:

(*a*) It is obvious that the later name Hushidar is linguistically nearer to the name Huwakhshatara (with its Babylonian form Uwakuishtar) than to the Avesta designation of Astawadereta or Astvaturta. Stonecipher in his "Dictionary of Graeco-Persian Names" identifies the Iranian names Oxathres and Oxuathres with Huwakhshatara and we can see how near these names are with the Pahalavi name Hushidar or Aushedar. I submit that the name Hushidar can be derived from the royal name without much difficulty.

(*b*) The Avesta does not furnish us with any details of the exploits of Astawad-ereta. The Zamyad Yasht only informs us that he wields the same victorious weapon which the warrior Thraitauna carried when he struck down Azi Dahaka. But later tradition evolved various exploits of Hushidar which are preserved for us in Bundehesh as well as in the Bahman Yasht. The Bahman Yasht (III, 5) lets us know how in the last days a vast army consisting of *the Assyrians,* Greeks, and Romans as well as other old foes of Iran will advance eastwards and will have to be met and defeated. The mention of the Assyrians and of their defeat by Varajavand and Hushidar assisted by a band of resuscitated heroes of old Iran makes it highly probable that the great conqueror of Assyria was to be numbered among this glorious band. *In the task of "slaying the Assyrian people" "destroying their abode" and "the lurking holes of the demons" (Bahman Yasht, III, 5) no one could conceivably take a larger or more appropriate share than Huwakhshatara*

who had broken the tyranny of Assyria and had destroyed Nineveh and other Assyrian strongholds. No one could also be called upon more appropriately to stem the tide of the last invaders of Iran than he who broke up the great Scythian invasion which is remembered in the Apocalyptic literature of so many nations.

Reading together Bahman Yasht, III, 5 and III, 6, we find that it was one of the tasks of Hushidar and his allies to "slay the Assyrian people destroy their abode and the lurking holes of the demons". For obviously it is only the party of the righteous heroes which could be expected to destroy "the lurking holes of the demons". Such an account of the happenings of the Millennium and of the exploits of Hushidar and his Iranian allies shows how little the Iranians had forgotten the invasions and cruel oppression of the Assyrian conquerors. It is also to be noted that it is not only in the Bahman Yasht that Hushidar and his allies are described as invading Assyria and inflicting retaliation on it. In fact, the statement in the Bahman Yasht is corroborated by the Persian Revayet of Nariman Hoshang. That Revayet of Nariman Hoshang informs us that Vahram Varajavand (the great ally of Hushidar) will start his expedition from the mountainous regions of Turkestan and Tibet and will, in the course of a nine years' war, *extend his conquests to Babylon.* (Cf. Darab Hormazdyar's Revayet, edited by Dr. J. J. Modi, Vol. II, pp 67–68). It is remarkable that the memories of Assyrian wars lasted in Persia as long as any religious traditions were left to transmit to posterity.

(*c*) It might also be noted that just as there were two heroes of the name of Hushidar in the Iranian Apocalypse (Hushidar and Hushidar-Mah,) so there were two Huwakhshataras known to the history of Media. The first was of course the great conqueror of Nineveh. But there was another prince of the same name who was the son of Astyages (Justi, *Namenbuch*, pp. 140; Xenophon, Kyropoedia, 1, 5, 2). It was this latter prince, or a pretender (Frawartish or Khshathrita) who had assumed his name, who long opposed Darius and fought for a revival of Median independence. The Medes had thus cause to glory in the names of two Huwakhshataras—the one who was the author of their national greatness while the other was the last hope of the Medians against the Persian domination. Both would naturally be remembered with regret by the Medians and their reappearance would be devoutly expected—as was the reappearance of Kai Khosru in other parts of Iran and that of the hero Kereśasp by the men of Sagistan. So also the men of Parthia who must have been proud of the memory of Gotarzes and his father Gew expected the reappearance of Gew in the last days; consequently, Gew, too, is one of the immortals (Bundehesh, XXIX, 6). It is noteworthy that all these representative heroes of various parts and dynasties of Iran are grouped together in the Pahlavi accounts as "immortals" who will assist in the "production of renovation" by the side of Hushidar (cf. Dadistan-i-Dinik, chap. 36, sec. 3). It would appear as if the Iranian apocalypse, as we now have it in the Bundehesh, the Bahman Yasht and the Dadistan-i-Dinik, is a

combination of all the local legends about the last days and the happenings of the millennia—a kind of variorum edition of provincial accounts.

(*d*) I now come to what I hope will be regarded as another strong argument for the identification of the names of Huwakhshatara and Hushidar. In the Pahlavi literature we read of the expected co-operation of Hushidar and Chitragmiyan (cf. Dinkard Book, IX, chap. 41, sec. 6; West, P. Texts, I, 117, 195, 224)—which is another name of Peshotan—in the renovation of the world. Now it can hardly be a mere coincidence that in later Median history a Huwakhshatara and a Chitrantakhma are historically found together—co-operating against Persian domination. For in the Median insurrection against Darius and the Persian rule we find a Frawartish (or Khshathrita) who was or pretended to be Huwakhshatara the son of Astyages (Behistun, II, 15; IV, 19-20). At the same time and on the same side was fighting a Chitrantakhma who professed to be (or who really was) a descendant of Huwakhshatara (Justi, *Namenbuch*, p. 140; Huart, *Ancient Persia*, p. 52). It is quite conceivable that it was this co-operation of a Huwakhshatara and a Chitrantakhma in the last effort to revive Median power which gave rise to the expectation about the co-operation of a Hushidar and a Chitrag-Miyan in the Iranian Apocalypse. It is very likely that the Medes regarded them as national heroes who were going to appear again some day to restore Median power. Nor should we convince ourselves on the mere word of their enemy Darius that these princes were pretenders. They may well have been scions of the old Median line.

(*e*) Two facts throw a great light on the place and time of the evolution of the Apocalyptic traditions of Iran. The first is that even kings of the later Arsacide dynasty are included among the band who are to assist the Saoshyant in his work. Thus, according to the Dadistan-i-Dinik, the king Gew will have a share in this work (West, P. Texts, II, 78); and historically Gew was an Arsacide prince and the father of Gotarzes who ruled in Parthia as late as A.D. 51. This example makes it still more probable that the most illustrious king of the much older Median line would also be included among the workers of renovation. The second significant fact is that it is only from among the heroes of Northern and Eastern Iran that the helpers of the Saoshyant have been selected. No one even out of the Illustrious Achaemenid or Sassanide lines of Western Iran has been accorded that honour. This circumstance proves that *the Apocalyptic traditions of Iran were developed in the Western part* of the country where Median influences predominated. But *if Median traditions guided the Apocalyptic ideas in Iran then it was more than likely that the greatest of Median heroes—Huwakhshatara—would figure prominently in it.* Here is one more argument for supposing that *the name Hushidar given to the future apostle was a reminiscence of the name of the great Median prince.*

Dr. West has contended that in the name of another hero of the Apocalypse—Vahram Varjavand there are mingled some reminiscences of the celebrated Persian general Bahram Chobin who lived under the Sassanides (West, Pahlavi Texts, part I p. 221, note 1). He would

have strengthened his argument if he had added that Bahram Chobin is said to have spent his last days in China (where he had fled after his attempt on the throne of Persia); and that Vahram Varjavand is "to appear in the direction of Chinistan", according to both the Bahman Yasht, III, 14 and the Persian Revayet of Nariman Hoshang. Nevertheless, the fact that a former general of the Sassanides figures in a way among the heroes of Iranian Apocalypse does not go against my proposition that only princes of Median and Arsacide lines figure in that Apocalypse. For Bahram Chobin claimed to be an enemy of the Sassanides and a restorer of the Arsacide tradition and line, which he attempted to resuscitate by overthrowing Khusrau II. In fact Bahram Chobin belonged to the house of Mihran which was of Arsacide origin.

The national genius of Iran, which was particularly fond of historical reminiscence, could only conceive of the last phase of the world as consisting of the resuscitation and clash of the great personalities of the past—whether bad or good. Azi Dahaka, who plays the leading role on the evil side, recieves his "call" from Ahriman himself who assists him further by knocking off his fetters (Bahman Yasht, III, 53–56). Similarly, the first of the great heroes on the good side Hushidar (Huwakhshatara) receives his "call" from Mitro (*ib.*, III, 47) while Srosh and Neryosang arouse the other righteous heroes Peshyotanu and Kereŝasp (*ib.*, III, 26 and 60). Obviously all these are heroes of the *past* of approved valour, though one of them is also—perhaps on account of his specially meritorious

service of the Zoroastrian faith in the past—acclaimed as the spiritual son of Zarathusht. The great importance of this particular hero (Huwakhshatara) in the work of the final millennia is further emphasised by the appearance of the two successive apostles bearing his name (Hushidar and Hushidar-Mah) both having the same miraculous birth, power and functions. Indeed, a good deal of the Persian Apocalypse is a sort of summary of the main events of the past history of Iran. On the side of the evil appear the successive invaders of Iran—the Greeks, the Romans, the Arabs, and the Turks. Nor are the most ancient invaders—the Assyrians—forgotten (Bahman Yasht, III, 5). Obviously, through the ages the memory of their ferocity had been kept alive among the writers of our faith—and proportionately, the name of their conqueror must have been venerated.

When all the old invaders were to advance on Iran led by the fiend Shedaspih and Azi Dahaka, the country had to call on its choicest heroes of old—Hushidar (Huwakhshatara) and Kereśasp. The importance given, on the one hand, to Hushidar (Huwakhshatara) as the first hero of the apocalypse, and on the other hand, to the destruction of the Assyrians (Bahman Yasht, III, 5) shows *the influence of Median ideas and historical reminiscences on the Apocalyptic literature of Iran.* For other parts of Iran had little experience either of "the Assyrian people" or of the "*lurking holes of the demons*" *situated in Asuristan*—among which we might safely infer, that Nineveh was included (Bahman Yasht, III, 5 and III, 22).

It is not only in the case of Iran that *Apocalyptic literature is only national history summarised and projected into the future.* Let us consider for a moment the book of Revelation in the Bible which has been well termed, "the blossom and fruit of a great apocalyptic movement". In this book in the thirteenth chapter we read of two beasts. The first beast with its ten horns represents the Roman Empire with its ten emperors. The second beast too represents the spirit of paganism and of Cæsar-worship. Among older enemies, Gog and Magog are also mentioned—the names referring to the old Scythian invaders. Obviously, Nero who did his best to deserve the hatred of the Christians appears as the protagonist of evil in the Christian Apocalypse as Dahaka does in the Iranian version.

Very great importance must be attached to this name "Shedaspih," which in reality forms *the connecting link between the Iranian and the Christian Apocalypse.* As a matter of fact, "Shedaspih" (Avest. Khshaetaspa *i.e.*, the rider on the white horse) who is designated as Keresiakih (or Christian) is a referenoe to "him that sat on the white horse" (Revelation, chap. 19, verses 11, 14, 19, 21). It is, of course, most regrettable that owing to religious and political hostilities lasting over centuries, the most venerable figures of one religion should arouse intense enmity in the followers of other faiths. And it is more instructive to turn to the *resemblances between the two ancient systems of Apocalypse.* Among the common features we note:

(*a*) the binding and the release of Satan or Azi Dahaka (Revel. ch. 20, v. 7).

(*b*) the successive millennia (*Ib.*, v. 3).

(*c*) the great final battle at Armageddon in the Revelation which is comparable with the great fight in the plains of Nishanak in Bahman Yasht, (ch. 3, verses 9 and 21).

(*d*) the dragon-beast-prophet of Revelation, chs. 12 and 13 which corresponds again to Azi Dahaka. It is noteworthy that *several of these resemblances are accounted for by the common influence of the Bel-Marduk legend on both accounts.* Finally, the persecution of the woman and the child by the dragon in Revelation, ch. 12, is very reminiscent of Dahaka's treatment and pursuit of the infant Feridun and his mother. Gunkel—a distinguished commentator—believes that the above reference in chs. 12 and 13 of the book of Revelation is based on the myth of Marduk. If he is right, we have here still another parallelism between the legends of Marduk and Feridun.

The fact emphasised above—that to the king (Dahaka) who happened to be unpopular with the Medians was assigned the Satanic part in the Zoroastrian Apocalypse, while the name of the monarch who was the most honoured by the Median race (Huwakhshatara) was connected with its brightest exploits—supports a well-known theory ably advocated by Prof. Gray of Columbia University. That theory is to the effect that primarily there were two distinct religious trends in Iran: the Persian (represented by

the Achaemenian inscriptions) and the Median (represented by Zoroastrianism), cf. Gray, *Foundations of the Iranian Religion*, pp. 4-12, and Jackson, *Zoroastrian studies*, p. 210. We have seen in the present paper that the heroes of the Iranian apocalypse are all taken from men of Media, Parthia and Sagistan. It is significant that none of the great Princes of the Achaemenid and Sassanide dynasties figure among the group of immortals. It is indeed a very significant fact that although Iran had been under the Sassanides for four centuries, and although the Sassanides hated the Arsacide traditions, Parthian Kings like Gew were recognised as ranking among the immortals. The inference is obvious, that the religious traditions of Iran—including those relating to the apocalypse—were framed under Median and Parthian influences, which were upto the end strong enough to set at naught and override the political ascendency and dynastic views of Western Persia. In this respect a contrast might be noticed between the treatment given to the respective royal lines by the Iranian religious works and by the Shahnameh. In the latter which is pre-eminently a political document the Sasssanides were accorded a great deal of space, while the direct mention of the Arsacides was limited to a single paragraph. On the other hand, in the religious works the tables are turned, and the Median and Arsacides lines figure predominantly. This shows that the religious traditions were formed and carried on for the most part in the North and East of Iran.

# 10

# THE SUPPOSED SCULPTURE OF ZOROASTER ON THE TAQ-I-BUSTAN.*

Quite a number of hypotheses have heen put forward as regards the identity of the "radiated figure" on the Taq-i-Bustan. Prof. Rawlinson and Mr. Thomas considered that this figure was meant to represent Ormazd. Sir R. Ker Porter and Flandin have thought the figure to be Zoroaster; while others, like the late Dr. Justi, have favoured its identification with Mithra. In his learned work on "Zoroaster, the Prophet of Iran," Prof. A. V. Williams Jackson concludes after reviewing the suggestions that, "so far, the case as between the Mithra and the Zoroaster theories is about evenly balanced;" but, obviously he is not quite satisfied with the proofs brought forward for the hypotheses so far advanced, since he adds that "the whole subject of the portraiture of Zoroaster requires further investigation."

In this paper I venture to put forward the suggestion that the radiated figure on the Taq represents the angel Bahram (or Verethraghna) who plays the leading part in all the miraculous legends associated with the career of Ardeshir-i-Papakan and the rise of the Sassanide dynasty.

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* Issued in the Journal and Proceedings, Asiatic Society of Bengal 12th March, 1928.

I am fully aware that I have no pretensions to speak with authority on such a question of Iranian archaeology; but it is surely permissible even for an outsider to state a case and to support it by arguments, leaving the decision of the matter to eminent experts.

I shall begin my treatment of the subject by stating the case for my hypothesis as regards the identity of the figure with the angel Bahram; I shall then examine the grounds for and merits of the other suggestions in the field which would identify it with (a) Mithra, (b) Zoroaster and (c) Ormazd.

### (1) STRONG PRESUMPTION FROM THE PREDOMINANCE OF THE ANGEL BAHRAM IN SASSANIDE TRADITION AND HISTORY.

It would be difficult to exaggerate the prominence of the cult of Bahram in the history, religious faith, art and numismatics of the Sassanides; and this circumstance, it is submitted, forms by itself a strong support for, and a very suitable introduction to, my suggestion as regards the identity of the figure we are studying with that angel. We have before us a group of figures symbolising the rise of the Sassanide dynasty to power and in the group there is the figure of a divinity whose identity we have to determine. Surely, the presumption is strong, in the absence of reasons to the contrary, that the figure represents the angel who played the most prominent part in the life and faith of Ardeshir and in the worship and belief of his dynasty. In the legends regarding the very birth and childhood of Ardeshir which are referred to by writers like Moses of Chorene, an important part is played by animals like

the raven, the eagle and the goat which were regarded as incarnations of Bahram (see Rawlinson's *Sixth Oriental Monarchy* page 366 note). The Karnameh and the Shahnameh both attribute the rescue of Ardeshir from great perils at the crisis of his career to this angel. On the coins of the Sassanides we often find kings, princes and even queens bearing crowns adorned with crests representing the boar, the eagle, the bull and (the horns of) the ram—all incarnations of the same angel (cf. Paruck *Sassanian Coins* No. 97, 125, 129 to 160; 173 to 178; 191-2, 295 and Herzfeld *Paikuli* vol. 1, p. 48). Nor is the fire altar ever absent from the coins.*

It is also very significant that no less than six kings of the dynasty bore the name of the same angel, while other minor rulers like "Shahran Baraz," "Varahran-Sapor," and "Varasgurte," (cf. Herzfeld's *Paikuli* I p. 161) have similar designations. Dr. Herzfeld also mentions names like Varaz-Peroz, Varaz-Shapuhr, Varaz-Tirdat as characteristic of the times, adding that the boar is the totem animal of the god Vihram

* I would refer for a moment to the bust which in some cases appears in the flames, on the reverse of Sassanian coins, which has been often supposed to be a Fravahar, and sometimes the god Hormazd (cf. Herzfeld *Paikuli* I, 82). Now I submit that in many cases this identification might be correct, but, not always so. For, in the first place, we have hardly any authoritative statement in Avesta or Pehlavi texts about Fravahars manifesting themselves in the sacrificial fire, and we might have expected that such an interesting phenomenon would receive some notice in these texts. In the second place I would suggest that in some cases at least, the figure in the flames represents the angel Bahram, since we are expressely told in the Dadistan-i-Dinik (Chap. 31 verse 7: S.B.E. Vol. 18 p. 65) that "when through the majesty of the creator spirits put on worldly appearances... then he whose patron saint (ahvo) is in the world is able to see the attending spirits in such similitude as... when *they see a fire in which is Varahram.*" More authority should be given to an express text than to conjecture.

(Op. cit. I. 130). Again on the dresses of the kings, on the plate of the gold and silver belonging to them, and on the silks made for them, appears a royal emblem or crest which was compounded of the characteristic features of several of the incarnations of Bahram (cf. Sarre *Die Kunst des alten Persien*, 94, 95, 101, 140, 141). On the few plaques which have been fortunately† picked up on the site of Ctesiphon we discover vivid and artistic representations of ram and the eagle —similar incarnations. (Sarre *op. cit.*, plate 103.) Nor is this all. The chosen and best troops of the Sassanide army were called "vartragikan," while their leader is "Ohormizd-varaz" (Herzfeld's *Paikuli*, 1 p. 173) or "Vartragnikan-Khwatay." Thus both the *élite* corps and its general are called after Bahram. Even the throne of Khusrau II is called by Firdausi "Mish-sar"—which has similar reference to the angel.

† We note that in plate 120 of Dr. Sarre's work the head of the royal emblem is that of a camel; in plates 94 and 102 the head is that of a boar; in plate 94 and elsewhere the emblem has the talons and the golden collar of the bird Varengana as required by Bahram Yasht verses 11, 15, 33, and 35. Many representations of that emblem have on them scales, to fulfil the requirements of the fish "Kara" in the same Yasht verse 29. In all drawings and carvings of the emblem the wings and the feathers of the tail are prominent, since it was the possession of these feathers of the bird which helped to secure victory and ensure the bearer against magical spells (Bahram Yasht, verses 34, 36 and 38 where we read how the feathers are to be utilised in order to secure victory). That the emblem was a royal one can be gathered from the same Yasht verses 39–40, where we are given the names of kings who employed the aid of the bird Varengana, and we are also informed that "the feather brings to its bearer the homage of men." (Verse 36). Nor would Khusrau II, the proudest of the Sassanides, bear on his dress any but the royal and most sacred emblem. The fact is that the whole of the Bahram Yasht could be used as commentary to explain that emblem. I am aware that somewhat similar emblems were used under Achemenides, but in those days they did not bear the distinguishing marks of Bahram; they were later adapted to that cult.

Indeed there was scarcely an occasion of any importance when the Sassanide failed to mark his devotion to the guardian angel of his line. All these lines of argument prove that historically the position of the leading Yazata was taken by Bahram in the Sassanide epoch—just as that role was filled by Mithra under the earlier dynasty. Consequently, it would be strange indeed, if Bahram was found unrepresented on the bas-relief which symbolised the rise of the Sassanides to power.

### (2) ARGUMENT FROM BAHRAM YASHT, SECTIONS 6 AND 10.

The main argument for my suggestion as regards the identification of the figure on the Taq-i-Bustan with Bahram is the striking resemblance between the figure and the description of the personal characteristics of that angel given in the Bahram Yasht. I would point out here that the resemblance holds both as regards the general idea of the figure and its details.

Thus in Bahram Yasht verses 26–27 (*S.B.E.*, Vol. 23, p. 238) we have a picture given of Bahram—"the best armed of the heavenly gods" which is unmistakably the same as the figure in our sculpture. "Verethraghna.....came to him the tenth time.....in the shape of a man, bright and beautiful, made by Mazda; he held a sword *with a golden blade, inlaid with all sorts of ornaments.* Thus did Verethraghna come, bearing the good glory made by Mazda." This passage accounts for many of the main features of the figure we are studying—the halo of glory on its head, the sword which it holds, the "ornaments" on that sword, as

well as for the martial attitude of the figure to which I would draw particular attention.

So far I have referred to the translation of this verse by Darmesteter. Other translators also interpret the text so that the description of the weapon agrees with the facts presented by the bas-relief. Spiegel has "bearing a sword with a golden hilt, adorned in every manner." The trantlations by Harlez and Bartholomæ do not differ in any respect.

Further, I would invite attention to the sixth section of the same Yasht where we read another description of the angel: "Verethraghna made by Ahura, came to him the sixth time running in the shape of a beautiful youth of fifteen, shining, clear-eyed, *thin-heeled.*" Spiegel translates the words as "small heels," while Bartholomæ agrees, adding in his *Worterbuch* a note that the small heels were meant to be a mark of beauty. Small or delicate heels are thus a distinguishing feature both of the angel and of our figure. Judging by the good photographs in in Sarre's book page 42 or Jackson's *Persia Past and Present*, p. 215, or by the excellent sketch furnished by Dieulafoy, we find that the feet of the radiated figure are the smallest among those of the group on the bas-relief. Even the footwear of the angelic figure appears something more shapely and flexible than the military boots worn by the royal figures. But an even more important and significant fact than the size of the feet is that it is just those "thin heels" which are resting on the supposed sun-flower. The idea of the sculptor no doubt was that such delicate heels required a soft

support. Possibly also the necessity of the lotus was also suggested to the sculptor by the numerous images of Buddha and other sacred figures from India which are represented as resting on lotuses. But, while in the Indian sculptures the whole foot is supported by the flower, on the Taq-i-Bustan only the heels rest on the flower, thus emphasising once more the idea of the "small or delicate heels."*

What I venture to infer is that the sculptor of the figure on the Tak-i-Bostan having before him the task of representing the angel Bahram paid due regard to both human incarnations of that angel as given in the Yasht, and combined these two in a single picture giving it the manly strength and ornamented sword of the warrior described in section 10 and the youthful appearance, light beard and moustache and delicate feet of the person described in section 6. Consequently, he portrayed on the head of the figure that "Glory made by Mazda" which is insisted on throughout the Yasht

* I have emphasised the fact of Bahram (the Mars of Persia) possessing "small" or "delicate" heels; for, besides serving our immediate purpose of identifying the figure which we are studying, it carries us further, and shows us a curious similarity in a certain detail between the "*heldensaga*" of Iran, Greece, and India. We all know that Achilles was vulnerable only in his heels: so also in the Bahram Yasht chapter 6 the angel Bahram or Mars is endowed with thin or delicate heels. But there is also another traditional hero of the Indo-Iranian mythology, Gandarewa—the spirit of the deep (called the "golden heeled") in the Keresaspa saga, who is also vulnerable in the same region. For, after a conflict of nine days Keresaspa finds no other way of overcoming him, than by grasping the sole of his foot and flaying off his skin. (Yasht XIX. 41. Pahlavi Rivayat in S.B.E. XVIII. 375. Carnoy, *Iranian Mythology* Page 325). In this connection, Prof. Taraporewalla of the Calcutta University has drawn my attention to the fact that in Indian Mythology Krishna is represented as having a vulnerable heel through which he was shot by a huntsman. Here are unexplained coincidences and resemblances worthy of being treated and explained by a *savant* of the learning and genius of Sir James Frazer.

as the appanage of Bahram as an angel. It is obviously a compromise portrait of the angel based on the two passages in the Yasht.

I might be allowed to quote yet another passage from the Bahram Yasht, which will cover some other features in the bas-relief. The 63rd verse of that Yasht describes the angel Bahram as one who "binds the hands, confounds the eye-sight, takes the hearing from the ears of" sinners who "can longer move their feet." This is an apt description of the awful plight of the fallen Artabanus in the bas-relief.

In general, it might be remarked, the Bahram Yasht seems to be the Yasht most striking in its accumulation of scenic effects. Each section brings up some characteristic picture of strength and virility, and in each case, this exhibition of energy is followed up by the chorus-like words repeated at the end:—"Thus did he come, bearing the good Glory made by Mazda." In the cult of this war-like angel, a succession of rich scenic effects must have been produced before the mental vision of the votaries and each of these scenes must have roused that admiring and enthusiastic response or chorus.

### (3) CORROBORATION OF THE HYPOTHESIS FROM THE KARNAMEH.

As by general consent one of the bas-relief is that of Ardeshir I, it is obvious that the highest authority at our disposal for the interpretation of the relief and the identification of the figures on it is the Karnameh or biography of Ardeshir. The Karnameh belongs to the

Sassanide age, and its guidance is equally valuable to whatever date in that epoch we ascribe the construction of the bas-relief.

Now, it is noteworthy that in the Karnameh *there is no mention of the angel Mithra,* while Ardeshir is made habitually to ascribe all success or happiness that he achieves to the "Glory of the Kayanians" and the "Victorious King of the Sacred Fires" (viz. the Atash-i-Vahram) jointly. Thus; in Darab Dastur Peshotan Sanjana's edition of the Karnameh, Chapter IV Section 15, the victory over Artabanus is ascribed to the glory of Kayans. In Chapter VII Section I the rescue of Ardeshir from the Kerman army is due to the glory of the Kayans; similarly in Chapter III Section 15 and 20 his rescue from the pursuit by Artabanus is also ascribed to the same glory. In Chapter X sections 16 and 17, on seeing his son safe Ardeshir gives thanks to the glory of Kayans and to "Victorious King of the sacred fires" (viz. Vahram) and he establishes an Atash-i-Vahram on that occasion. In Chapter VIII section 17, on the conquest of Kerman, he causes an Atash-i-Vahram to be established there. Again, the Persian name of the city built by Ardeshir after his victory over Artabanus was Khorreh-i-Ardeshir.

Thus, from the Karnameh we might infer that the figure with the halo on the bas-relief would be either the Glory of Kayans or Bahram. But the Glory of Kayans could, obviously, not be portrayed as a human figure; for it was only an attribute passing from certain historical personages to others e. g. Yima, Keresasp or Kai Khusro. It is so far from having a fixed and

definite human shape that it sometimes becomes identified with an arm of the sea or a bird (Zamyad Yasht 35, 39). Hence it was only possible to form an image of the angel Bahram on the bas-relief, but bearing the halo of the glory. For, there had been going on a syncretism of the glory (Khvarenangho) and Bahram, and a consolidation or mixing up of their attributes and incarnations. Thus in the Zamyad Yasht itself (verse 35) the glory assumed "the shape of a Varaghna bird"—which is also an incarnation of the angel Bahram (Bahram Yasht, 18-21). This identification of the two was also recognised by the Karnameh; for when the Glory appears to rescue Ardeshir from the pursuit of Artabanus it assumes the shape of ram or an eagle (Karnameh Chapter III, Section 1120) which are other incarnations of Bahram. The figure on the Tak-i-Bostan is, therefore, that of Bahram, but "bearing the glory," as he is recognised so often to be doing in the Bahram Yasht. This identification and syncretism of Bahram and the Glory of Kayans was carried to its logical conclusion after the fall of the Sassanides. For, in the absence of any king of the old faith, the Parsis in India argued, most logically from the premises furnished by the Bahram and the Zamyad Yashts, that the Royal Glory was residing in the fire of Bahram which they had established in India. They, therefore, conferred on it the title of "Iranshah" the King of Persia, and in that fire of Bahram the "Glory of Kayans" has been finally subsumed. It would be difficult to find another example of such a steady, deliberate and complete syncretism.

### (4) IMAGES OF BAHRAM IN MEDIEVAL PERSIA.

It is perhaps not irrelevant to point out that in the middle ages, images of Bahram were to be found, which were in some respects similar to the figure on the Taq-i-Bustan, and which were worshipped by mystics who professed to adhere to the Zoroastrian tradition. Thus the Dabistan-i-Mazahib refers to temples of Bahram where his image was carved in red stone; he has a crown on his head, a sword in his right hand which hangs by his side, while in the left hand which is raised there is an iron scourge. In Sir John Malcolm's History of Persia we have the images of Bahram reproduced (Vol. I, page 186). Both the figure on the Taq and the one reproduced by Malcolm are those of young angels, with light moustache and beard, and holding up a weapon. The radiation on the head of the former figure *might* in the process of extreme artistic simplification (such as is found in the images reproduced by Malcolm) be reduced to a crown. In any case, the crown on the head of the medieval images of Bahram is much like the "turreted crown" on the reverse of many Sassanide coins (cf. Herzfeld *Paikuli*, Vol. I, page 32).

### (II) THE MITHRA THEORY EXAMINED.

Coming to examine the theory which identifies the radiated figure with Mithra, we would do well to remember that the tablet on the Taq-i-Bustan is not only a representation of the transfer of the crown to the Sassanides in the person of Ardeshir or his son, but also of the fall of Parthia, or of its last prince who is drawn as prostrate under the feet of the two Sassanide Kings. But surely, in the delineation of such a scene

Mithra would be quite out of place, since he (together with the sun) was one of the chief objects of reverence to the Parthians. As Rawlinson tells us, under the Parthians "temples of the Sun abounded, where images of Mithra were the objects of worship, and the Mithraic cult was carried out with a variety of imposing ceremonies." (Rawlinson's *Seventh Great Oriental Monarchy*, p. 56). Thus, to great extent Mithra was identified with the Parthian *regime*, which is also proved by the number of Kings of Parthia who bore a name derived from Mithra, i.e, appropriately, Mithradates. He was obviously not the deity to preside over a scene emphasising the fall of Parthia and its dynasty; indeed, he would be quite out of place therein. Mithra could not be expected to delight in the transfer of power from a house which gloried in the name of "Mithradates" to one which rejoiced in the name of Bahram.

(1) EXAMINATION OF THE "SUN-FLOWER" ARGUMENT.

In support of the theory identifying the figure on the Taq-i-Bustan with Mithra, much has been made of the "sun-flower" on which the figure stands and the "mace" which he is supposed to hold. As regards the sun-flower, however, we must have due regard not so much to our own ideas on the subject as to the sacerdotal "language of flowers" as understood by the Sassanide age. Our authority on this topic should be the Bundahish, chapter 27, verse 24, which begins by informing us that every single flower is appropriate to an angel and then lays down that "all violets" are the flowers appropriate to Mithra; the lily is sacred to

Horvadad, and the waterlily to Avan," while "the myrtle and jasmine are Auharmazd's own," and "the Sisebar is Vahram's." In the presence of such a detailed and developed angelologic significance of flowers, the presence of the sun-flower at the foot of the image on the Taq does not help the Mithra theory. It might be added that we have proof that the sculptors of the Taq-i-Bustan were aware of the above-mentioned allocation of particular flowers to particular angels; for, where they represent the goddess Ardvisura Anahita, on the capitals of that Tak they do not fail to engrave by her side the water-lily (cf. Rawlinson, The *Seventh Monarchy*, page 601 and Sarre *Die Kunst des alten Persien*, page 44) in strict accordance with the rule laid down by the Bundahish.

Even had the Sun-flower appertained to Mithra according to Sassanide ideas, there was neither reason nor tradition for placing it under the feet of Mithra. Thus in the case of Anahita, for example, the lily is placed at her side. Only in the case of Bahram, the flower had to be under his "thin heels" to protect them.

(2) "MACE" OR "SWORD"?

Nor can it be proved that the figure is bearing in his hands a "mace;" and indeed a comparison of the length and breadth of the weapon in question with the scabbard of the central figure on the Tak strongly suggests that it is a sword. As Prof. Jackson significantly observes "the grooved lines (on the staff) which run parallel with its entire length are plainly visible, and resemble the flutings on the scabbard of

the middle figure" (*Persia Past and Present*, p. 218). Such a close correspondence would be impossible and unmeaning between a "mace" or a "staff" and a scabbard. Similarly, Dr. J. J. Modi, the *savant* who visited the place most recently, says that the weapon in question looks much "like a long and thin chip," a description which might well apply to a straight sword such as was used in Persia in those days, but rules out the idea of a "mace." Nor is it necessary to suppose that because the weapon is held with both hands it must be a mace; for we find on various coins of the Sassanides both the King and priest are holding a sword with both hands (Cf. Coins No. 101, 194–204 and 258–277 in F. D. J. Paruck's *Sassanian coins*) brought to one side before the sacred fire. Obviously, it was one of the ceremonial ways of holding the sword on certain religious occasions; other methods of carrying the sword on similar occasions can also be found on Sassanian coins. There appears to be a remarkable similarity between the figure on the Taq-i-Bustan and that of some of the figures on the reverse of the coins of Shapur II and Shapur III, as regards attitude, dress and the mode of carrying the sword in both hands. This might corroborate the view as to the bas-relief having been constructed in the reign of Shapur III.

### (3) THE ARGUMENT FROM THE NIMBUS OF RAYS AROUND THE HEAD OF THE FIGURE.

This has been the main argument advanced to prove that the figure in question is that of Mithra. But not much weight can be given to it. The glory was not a characteristic feature of Mithra as contrasted

with other angels. We have already seen both from the Bahram Yasht and Zamyad Yasht that the glory was closely associated and even identified with Bahram. When, for instance, the Shahnameh or the Karnameh mention the fact of the ram or the eagle helping Ardeshir in his flight from Artabanus they attribute the credit to the glory, though the ram and the eagle are incarnations of Bahram—so close was the association of the glory and that angel in the public mind. But, if we take into account the rest of the Zoroastrian angelology, the glory was in no way peculiar to Mithra. A reference to Stein's "Zoroastrian Deities on Indo-Scythian Coins" will show that besides Mithra other deities were pictured with "the radiate disk" —Ardavahishto, for example. The glory was not even a distinguishing characteristic of deities, but belonged to heroes like Yima and Keresaspa of old, and even to some heroes of a much later date. Thus in the Karnameh, we are given a vision of Papak in which he sees *Sasan with the glory of sun-rays surrounding his head.* Thus the presence of the halo or glory does not help us conclusively to identify the figure in question with Mithra. It is, therefore somewhat surprising that a learned *savant* like Dr. Herzfeld identifies a figure on the reverse of the *aureus* of King Hormizd with Mithra, on the ground that it is "clearly characterised by the nimbus of sun-rays round his head" (Herzfeld's *Paikuli* I, p. 46). It would be singular, to say the least, that Mithra, the God of heavenly light, should be made to stand in worship before an earthly fire.

### (4) OTHER ARGUMENTS FOR AND AGAINST THE MITHRA THEORY.

It is no part of the work of a historical enquirer to keep back evidence which supports the view which he controverts. I have in my humble way endeavoured to appreciate the merits of the theory which would identify the figure on the Tak with Mithra. I feel that its advocates could and should have quoted in favour of their hypothesis, Mihir Yasht verses 27, 37, 43, 45, and 113, where that angel is said to "throw down the heads of those that lie to him" (as the head of Artabanus is thrown in the bas-relief); to guard the ways of those whose life is sought by men who lie unto Mithra (as the life of Ardeshir I had been sought by Artabanus) and to "confound the way of the nation that delights in havoc" (like the way of the Parthians). The view that the other two figures in the bas-relief—besides that of Ardeshir—represent Ahura and Mithra also receives some slight support from the Mihir Yasht verse 113 (*S.B.E.*, XXIII, p. 148).

These arguments occurred to me, and I still admit their force. But the whole historical setting of the bas-relief is against the hypothesis that the figure is Mithra's. It was not possible to accuse the Parthians who were devoted to Mithra, who gave the name of Mithradates to many of their sovereigns, and in whose *regime* Mithraism started from Persia almost to conquer the world, of being among "those who lie to Mithra." Rather, indications are to be found showing that the Arsacides accused Ardeshir I of "lying to Mithra" in that he rose in rebellion against his suzerain.

(Karnameh chap. 9 section 5.) This fact in itself would deter Ardeshir from engraving Mithra on his bas-relief. But, further, the physical characteristics ascribed to Mithra in his Yasht (verses 67, 112, and 124) are not to be found in the figure on the Tak-i-Bostan; and we have good cause to regard with respect the knowledge of Avesta and later tradition exhibited by the sculptor of the bas-relief. Above all we have to take account of the change of emphasis in the matter of devotion to particular angels which is noticeable between the Parthian and the Sassanide epochs. This change is proved by the absence of any mention of Mithra in the Karnameh—a work saturated with religion, legends and mythology of all kinds. Nor does the Paikuli inscription refer directly or indirectly to that angel.

A great difficulty in the way of the Mithra theory is the position of the central figure of the bas-relief with his back almost turned toward the figure with the nimbus of rays. It is inconceivable that the King should turn his back towards Mithra. On the Nimrud Dagh table the King has his face fully and devoutly turned towards Mithra. But, if we take the nimbus-figure to be Bahram, this difficulty disappears. For, in the Shahnameh and the Karnameh when the ram or eagle representing Bahram comes to the rescue af Ardeshir, it sits behind the back of the latter to protect him. So also in various coins of the Sassanide period, the King and the priest standing on each side of the fire assume an attitude averted from the fire.

(Paruck *Sassanian coins* No 105–145 Herzfeld *Paikuli* Vol. I, p. 48, plate A, Fig. 20, No. 2 and 3).

(5) DR. HERZFELD'S SUGGESTION.

I have studied the suggestion advanced recently by so eminent a *savant* as Dr. Herzfeld, and accepted by Dr. Sarre, to the effect that the bas-relief we are examining represents the crowning of Ardeshir II by Ahuramazda assisted by Mithra. But various difficulties present themselves in the way of the acceptance of this suggestion. In the first place neither according to the Mihir yasht nor the Pehlavi texts has Mithra any special functions as regards the coronation of kings. Originally the god of the heavenly light, he became more and more a guardian of morals, the knower and preserver of truth and good faith, but without any reference to earthly royalty. In support of this we note that, while the idea of royalty and coronation occurs so often both in the Karnameh and in the many contemporary inscriptions translated so ably by Dr. Herzfeld himself, there is no mention of Mithra in any of these. There is no question as to the fact that it is Khwareno (royal glory) who should be the chief factor in the conferment or transfer of sovereignty. This glory is referred to repeatedly in the Karnameh, and thrice at least in the Paikuli inscription very pointedly. We read in the Paikuli inscription (Vol. I, page 97) that "the King of Kings graciously from Armenia yonder to Eranshahr might return and the *majesty*, the Empire and his own throne and the royalty of his ancestors from the gods might receive." There are other references to the Khvareh of Ardeshir I himself in that

inscription which show the importance of that angel in any representations of coronations. In fact, according to all those fairly contemporary documents, the proper angel to be present on the Taq-i-Bustan relief should be the Khvareh, whether the coronation is that of Ardeshir I or of Ardeshir II. This, I admit, but I add that this glory is most often borne by Bahram, and is in a very important sense identified with him. Sir A. Stein has observed, we are dealing with an age of syncretisms, and there had already been among them a syncretism of Bahram and Vanainti Uparatat. In any case, there was no warrant for representing the Glory as a warrior bearing a sword; for in the Zamyad Yasht the Glory is a quality associated with angels and men and even residing in birds and arms of the sea.

I might be allowed here to submit some arguments in favour of the view that the central figure on the bas-relief is Ardeshir I (and not Ardeshir II). As we have seen, the Paikuli inscription and the Karnameh which represent genuine and general Sassanide traditions associate the Khvareh (glory) with Ardeshir I, almost whenever they mention him. There can hardly be a doubt that we have a representation of the Khvareh (the nimbus or glory) on the bas-relief, and this fact makes it very likely that the adjoining figure is that of Ardeshir I. We read in the Karnameh of the Khvareh coming and standing very near Ardeshir I and that seems to be the subject of the picture on the bas-relief. In the second place, had a comparatively unimportant King like Ardeshir II been represented on the bas-relif, he would have taken care

to add his own name with an inscription in order to commemorate himself; even Shapur II and Shapur III have not neglected that precaution on the Taq-i-Bustan. It might be safely conjectured that one of the most striking of bas-reliefs on the Taq-i-Bustan (the one we are discussing) was left without a descriptive title, only because it represented a particularly distinguished prince and a scene well known to the people from history and legend. Finally, there is the likelihood that Ardeshir II was a very old man at his accession (Herzfeld *Paikuli* I. p. 50) while the central figure on our bas-relief looks nothing like so old.

With all respect for Dr. Herzfeld, I advance the following objections to his hypothesis:—

(1) We have no warrant or authority for supposing that the right hand figure of the sculpture is Ahura Mazda, as that savant supposes. The figure has none of the paraphernalia and equipment of Ahura Mazda as drawn on other bas-reliefs. On this point one is in the happy position of quoting Dr. Herzfeld's own great authority against his suggestion. For his present suggestion is inconsistent with his own brilliant theory about the evolution of the symbol for Ahura Mazda from the Achemenian or even earlier times. Obviously, the right hand figure on our bas-relief bears no resemblance (in the matter of equipment or appearance) to the bas-relief representation of the divine at Behistun, or at the Naqsh-i-Rustam, or on the coins of Vatfradata I or of the Shahs of Stakhra. (Herzfeld's *Paikuli* I, 47). The truth seems to be that the right hand figure is a human figure and its crown and

appearance reminds us of the coins of Shapur I, as the head-dress and appearance of the central figure is reminiscent of the coins of Ardeshir I. (Herzfeld's *Am Tor Von Asien* p. 61).

(2) If the two extreme figures on the bas-relief were two divine figures, as Dr. Herzfeld suggests, there would be a disharmony of a marked character in the sculpture—one god having the full divine equipment, weapon and a lotus pedestal; while the other god has no divine equipment at all, and even shares his pedestal with a mortal.

(3) There is no precedent in Achamenian or Sassanian sculpture of a god and a man standing together on a fallen figure—nor even of two royal figures standing together in that way. Indeed, the only occasion on which in Persian History two kings triumphed together on the same foe was the case of Ardeshir I and Shapur I (conquering Artabanus jointly)—the latter fighting on the battle field of Hormuzan and distinguishing himself as a crown prince. This unique fact in Persian History ,would in itself suffice to identify the figures on the bas-relief as those of Ardeshir I and Shapur I.

(4) Ardeshir II never conquered any foe—either Iranian or foreign—and indeed he was himself deposed after four year's of precarious rule. Hence there was no occasion for him to have himself engraved on a triumphant bas-relief. His claim to any triumph was less than that of Bahram IV whom Dr. Herzfeld mentions (*Am Tor Von Asien*, p. 62), for the latter

partitioned Armenia with Rome and hence had himself engraved standing on a fallen Roman.

(5) We might admit Dr. Herzfeld's contention that the bas-relief was of a later date and age than that of Ardeshir I, as is shown by the style of the sculpture (*Am Tor Von Asien*, pp. 64–66). That learned author has done a real service in drawing attention to this fact. But there would be nothing strange or out of the common in a later king erecting the bas-relief to the honour and memory of Ardeshir I who was regarded as divine by his dynasty. Such an act would be particularly appropriate in Ardeshir II who bore the name and copied the head-dress of Ardeshir I.

(6) There is good authority in later literature for the blessing of later kings by the spirit (fravahar) of Ardeshir I, the founder of the dynasty. Thus, in the *Afrin-i-Rapitvin*, we read that "*Hama-zor fravahar-i-Ardeshir-i-Babakan bad.*" This phrase seems to describe well the relative position of the two right hand figures of our bas-relief; and for the conjectural idea of "Belehnung" or "Consecration" we might advisedly substitute that of "hama-zor" which has religious tradition and texts behind it. The holding of the circular emblem by two figures on various bas-reliefs might well be the symbol of "hama-zor." Thus on one relief at Naqsh-i-Rustam, Ardeshir I is "hama-zor" with Ahura-Mazda, while between the supposed tomb of Darius II and that of Darius I, King Naresh is represented as "hama-zor" with Anahita whom, as his favourite angel, he had also sculptured on the Paikuli monument. This attitude of "Hama-zor"

appears in some cases to be reminiscent of the practice of "taking the hand of Bel" in Babylonian days.

We have now dealt with the main arguments for the view that the figure with the halo on the Taq-i-Bustan is the sun-god Mithra. For an excellent presentation of this view the student might be referred to Dr. Justi's "Life and Legend of Zarathushtra" in *Avesta Studies, etc., in Honour of Peshotanji Sanjana*, pp. 157–8. We have seen that the weapon borne by that figure is not the "mace" or "club" required by the Mithra theory. Nor does the "star-lotus flower" at the feet of the figure help out the theory. In the Avesta there is no hint of the star-lotus flower being sacred to or symbolical of Mithra; and in the Pahlavi literature the lotus flower is expressly and authoritatively stated to belong to another Yazata. Dr. Justi instituted a comparison between the figure on the Taq-i-Bustan and the relief at Nimrod Dagh where Mithra is giving his hand to Antiochus of Kommagene (cf. Sarre *Die Kunst des alten Persian Taf.* 56) It would have been more appropriate to speak of *contrast* between the two delineations—the dress and accoutrement of the angel and the attitude of the human figure towards him are quite different on the two reliefs. On the Nimrod Dagh figure, the angel's eyes are fixed steadily on his devotee and radiate spiritual influence. On the Taq-i-Bustan the god of war advances to support his favourite from behind. The only feature which is common to the two representations is the halo of rays round the head. The face of the real Mithra on the Nimrod Dagh is that of a boy; he does

not wear a sword but carries only a short knife; his head-dress is quite different—being the tall Phrygian cap; and there is no lotus flower at his feet which is conspicuous on the Taq-i-Bustan.

(III) DOES THE FIGURE REPRESENT ZOROASTER?

As regards the view that the figure on the Taq-i-Bustan represents Zoroaster, it needs to be emphasised that it rests on no arguments advanced for such an identification, but relies simply on a supposed "Parsi tradition." But had there really existed such a tradition worthy of the name, it would not have remained entirely neglected by such authoritative works as the Bundahish or Zarthusht Bahram's life of Zoroaster, or the Shahnameh, or the Arab writers who have referred to the Taq-i-Bustan sculptures. Indeed, there were no materials or circumstances on which such a tradition could be based Had there been a Zoroastrian colony residing near Kermanshah and venerating the image, or had the Zoroastrians living in Persia been making even occasional pilgrimages to the Taq, there would have been a reliable "tradition" as regards the figure. But what tradition could form about the figure in the almost complete absence of personal visits to or veneration of that image, and of any records relating to it?

We have also to remember that it was much more difficult for a Sassanide sculptor to produce an image of Zoroaster than that of any of the *Yazatas*. Indeed, the difficulties were insuperable in the ways of producing a portrait or sculpture of Zoroaster which would satisfy the men of the Sassanide epoch, when Avesta

and Pahlavi works were read fairly widely; for neither the Avesta nor the Pahlavi texts give us anything like a description of the personal features of the prophet. It was far easier to produce sculptures of and to represent satisfactorily and authoritatively, many of the *Yazatas*, especially Mithra, Bahram, Ardvisura Anahita and Ashi Vanghui who are fully described in the Yashts. Hence, in an age in which the Avesta and Pehlavi literatures were widely studied it was evident to all concerned that there were no existing materials for a representation of Zoroaster, and the formation of any traditional picure of the prophet was out of the question.

But when Avesta and Pahlavi studies declined and the matter was left to poets and romancers, a traditional portrait of Zoroaster came into existence, and is to be seen in innumerable manuscript and printed copies of the Shahnameh, and in some earlier printed editions of the Khordeh Avesta. But, this really "traditional" portrait of the prophet has little in common with the sculpture on the Taq-i-Bustan. In this traditional portrait Zoroaster always appears with the fire Mihr Burzin which, according to the epic (though not according to Bundahish, Chapter 17, verses 5–8) he brought from heaven; he also bears a branch of his miraculous cypress, and sometimes his "book". In many of the portraits there is a halo about his head. The tradition is not only pictorial but literary—running through the Shahnameh, the Sharestan-i-Chahar-Chaman and the Dabistan. But, obviously, it was not accepted by the Avesta students even in the middle ages; for Zartusht

Bahram in his life of the prophet gives us no such personal description of Zoroaster.

The so-called portraits of the prophet which are in possession of the Parsis in India are easily accounted for; and there is no question of any of these representations being based on an independent tradition. The picture on the Taq-i-Bustan became available to them, early in the last century, through Sir R. Ker Porter's "Travels" and Sir John Malcolm's "History of Persia," together with the hint that it might represent the prophet of Iran. We note that, as the result of this, most early printed copies of the Khordeh Avesta in Gujrati script bear the Taq-i-Bustan figure as a frontispiece representing Zoroaster. But the Parsis had also with them the "traditional" representation of Zoroaster in the Shahnameh, etc. Hence, most of the later representations of Zoroaster are composite copies of these two; and in almost all cases a lot of additional embellishment is added at the wish of the artist. The local artists have considered themselves entitled to give the reins to their imaginations; and as a result hardly any two portraits of the prophet painted or drawn in India resemble each other. Under such conditions little importance should be attached to their "traditional" portraits.

Speaking of the supposed Parsi tradition in favour of identifying the figuer on the Taq-i-Bustan with Zoroaster, it is worth noting that a learned Parsi authority, Dr. J. J. Modi has, in his recently published Travels in Persia (p. 361) told us that after personally inspecting the bas-relief he is unable any more to sub-

scribe to that tradition. He has expressed his conviction that the place assigned to the supposed prophet in the bas-relief does not accord with the peculiar respect due to him. As I have pointed out earlier, the central figure stands fairly with his back to the figure in question; and in this connection Dr. Modi could have quoted the words ascribed to Zoroaster himself in Chapter XX, 13 of Selections of Zad-Sparam (S. B. E., Vol. XLVII, p. 154): "Whosoever takes away a sight from me, does not practise respect for me."

There are other important considerations which render the view as to the identity of our figure with Zoroaster very difficult of acceptance. In the first place, the prophet of Iran attained the venerable age of 77 when he passed away; and if the sculptor of the Taq-i-Bustan had really desired to give us his portrait, he would not have engraved such a comparatively youthful and athletic figure as we have before us. In the second place, Zoroaster was eminently a man of peace and good-will towards all, and we have no hint anywhere of any military exploits of his. It would be highly inconsistent with such general testimony, to represent him holding a heavy sword with both his hands in the bas-relief. The contrast is the more inexplicable and glaring, since only the supposed prophet bears a drawn sword, while the two other personages on the bas-relief are engaged in peaceful occupations. Whether we regard these two other personages as Ormazd and Ardeshir I (with Justi) or as Ardshir I and Shapur I (with other authorities), the anomaly of a peaceful, old and venerable prophet alone bearing a sword and

presiding over the scene in a martial attitude is obvious. But if, as I have suggested, the figure is that of the angel Bahram, it is most natural that the warrior-angel should perform such a function.

### (IV) THE HYPOTHESIS IDENTIFYING THE FIGURE WITH AHURA-MAZD

As both Prof. Rawlinson and Mr. Thomas have suggested that the "radiated figure" is Ahura-Mazda (cf. *Seventh Oriental Monarchy*, p. 64 and *Journal of Asiatic Society*, New Series, Vol. III, p. 267, note 3), it is due to the reputation of these scholars to discuss their suggestions. I venture to submit, however, that to me their hypothesis appears to be the weakest put forward to account for the "radiated figure." What are taken to be the traditional images of Ahura-Mazda have personal characteristics very different from those of the figure on the Taq-i-Bustan. On the Parthian coins and elsewhere "Ahura-Mazda regularly appears as a bearded man in a winged disc" (Dr. A. J. Carnoy in *Iranian Mythology*, p. 342). Dr. Herzfeld has given us "the uninterrupted evolution of the Divine symbol from the Assyrian up to the Sassanian epoch" (cf. *Paikuli*, Vol. I, p. 47). Then again Ahura-Mazda appears in the bas-relief at Naksh-i-Rustam in which he is represented as bestowing the insignia of royalty on Ardeshir I (cf. Ker Porter, *Travels*, Vol. I, plate 27; Flandin, plate 193; Curzon's *Persia*, Vol. II, p. 125), but there also he "has a long beard and flowing locks." Admitting for arguments' sake that these latter are the representations of Ahura-Mazda, the very youthful and in other respects different figure on the Taq-i-Bustan

*obviously* cannot represent the same divinity. It is certain that Mr. Thomas himself had felt the force of this difficulty as regards his hypothesis; for, he adds, in his footnote, that on the Taq-i-Bustan "Ormazd is depicted in a new or modified form." But he furnishes no reason for such novelty or modification.

### THE ARTISTIC ASPECT OF THE BAS-RELIEF.

Let us for a moment drop the archæological point of view and consider how the present suggestion as to the identity of the nimbus-figure with Bahram fits into the conception of the bas-relief as a work of art. For, after all, and in the main, it is an artist's conception and must be studied as such.

Suppose the view advanced here to be true that the two royal figures standing on the prostrate and fallen Parthian are those of Ardeshir I and Shapur I who are triumphing on their victory over Parthia; Ardeshir I is depicted as about to assume the sovereignty of Persia and he is just going to receive the reward of a life time of striving and fighting. In this supreme moment of the crowning of his life's ambitions and of the assurance of his son's future as well, Ardeshir feels that the sacred presence which has so often stood by him in his fights has appeared behind him to support him. To adapt the words of the Karnameh itself "the glory of the Kayans which had been previously far from Ardeshir now stood near him and gradually approached nearer." If we look at the bas-relief, we see how near the glory is to Ardeshir—so near indeed that Ardeshir feels the flash of a great protecting sword held aloft in his rear and understands that the glory is

borne by its powerful co-adjutor—Bahram; for no mere glory can bear a great sword. It is this dramatic moment of this advent of Bahram with his glory to support Ardeshir that the artist of the bas-relief has meant to represent for us—it is the apotheosis of Ardeshir I.

Very appropriately the artist has selected for representation that particular moment when the angel appears on the scene of the transfer of royal power. Indeed under the bas-relief might be inscribed as its descriptive title those words which so often reverberate through the Bahram Yasht, and which also assert the syncretism and the inseparable association of the Glory and Bahram.

*avaθa ājasat vōhŭ Xvarenō Mazda-dātem barat.*

"Thus did he (Bahram) arrive (to help), bearing the good glory made by Mazda."

Certainly, the pious Zoroastrian of the Sassanian age who was versed in the legendary lore of Ardeshir's career, had no doubt, when he looked up to the bas-relief that the King owed his rise to the signal and timely help from that angel.

## CONCLUSION.

Summarising the line of argument developed above, I venture to submit, that the most probable hypothesis is that identifying the figure on the Taq-i-Bustan with the angel Bahram. This hypothesis has in its favour the fact that in the sculpture we find—both as regards the general idea and the details—the fulfilment of the description of the physical

features of that angel as laid down by the Bahram Yasht. Not only does this suggestion account for most of the features of the figure, but it is, I submit, broadbased opon the large mass of contemporary tradition and inscriptions and on all that we can learn from the Sassanide sources relevant to the problem in hand. The next strongest theory which, in my humble opinion, is the Mithra theory, seems to be much less convincing, because it is not based on such general considerations, but is grounded upon isolated circumstances like the nimbus on the head of the figure and on the supposed sun-flower at its feet. But if one or two isolated circumstances like these are to carry conviction and to decide the problem, a much more likely suggestion could be easily put forward. The theory could well be advanced, for example, that the figure with the halo represents Sasan (the ancestor of the Sassanides); for in the early portion of the Karnameh we read: "One night Papak saw in a dream as though the sun was shining from the head of Sasan." That text would no doubt, in a sense, account for the figure with the halo on the bas-relief, and no one could deny the propriety of the legendary ancestor of the house of Sasan appearing on a bas-relief representing the rise of his dynasty. But, as I have submitted above, isolated circumstances or coincidences cannot by themselves prove a historical case; and a solution of our problem should rest on larger and surer historical grounds. The great bas-relief of the Sassanide age should be interpreted, in the light of its favourite cult and of the historical legends of the period.

I conclude by expressing the hope that distinguished Avesta scholars and archæologists will do me the honour of examining my thesis and my arguments. The subject of our study is a fascinating one in itself, and of importance both to the Parsis and to the history of Persia, and it will no doubt secure the attention which it deserves. Meanwhile there is one local scholar to whom I must express my obligations. I am obliged to Prof. Taraporwalla for the loan of several books from his collection and for making available to me alternative translations of the texts quoted from the Bahram Yasht.

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**Opinions of eminent Iranists and Sinologists on papers contained in "Cults and Legends of Ancient Iran and China."**

**Prof. A. V. Williams Jackson, (Columbia University).**

I have been reading your three valued offprints at different times with interest and profit. The idea, in the first of the three papers of pointing out some similarities between "Zoroastrian Legends and Chinese Parallels" is suggestive. I should have been glad to add a reference to section 9 of this article (the Cypress of Kashmăr) if I had it when I wrote on that subject in my volume of *Zoroastrian Studies* p. 255–266. In the second paper, "Bahram Yasht: Analogues and Origins," I found many interesting points (especially the birds) to be studied further. The third paper, "Astronomy and Astrology in the Bahram Yasht," I finished today, having gained much from its suggestions. (12–12–1929)

I have read the reprint "Some Cults and Legends of Ancient Persia and China" with lively interest, as I do all your articles.. The Cult of the Waters you have admirably treated.....The Cult of the Mountains, and the legends about the winds, and your Faredun legends, are all interesting.

(2–4–1930)

**Prof. Louis H. Gray, (Columbia University).**

I have read with much interest the three studies on the Shahnameh Legends and the Bahram Yasht. Your thesis of a connexion between Iranian and Chinese legends is very attractive, and seems quite within the range not merely of possibility, but of probability. (9–10–1929)

"The latter (the 'Chapter on Parthian History in the Shahnameh') particularly interested me at the moment. Your argumentation appears to me to be excellent, and of much value in view of our almost total lack of Oriental material concerning the Parthian Dynasty. I hope that you will pursue you researches further along this line."

(26-11-35)

I have read with much interest your study on "Some Cults and Legends of Ancient Persia and China"; and my view of your thesis in general remains, I am glad to say, unchanged. In particular, the cumulative type in the story of "King Kawoos and the Emperor Chou-wang" seems particularly cogent. Your sections on the apparel of the Spirit of Waters, and the first part of the same spirit's Palace, the Glory, the Winds, and Faredun also seem sound. (26-1-1930)

Prof. Dr. F. E. A. Krause. (Heidelberg University).

With many thanks I received your kind favour of Sept. 5th and the enclosed papers about the transmission of legends between Iran and China by way of the Saka race, the contents of which I read with high interest. I firmly believe that you hit by your parallels on a point of general importance deserving serious consideration.....Whether the stock of legends you are discussing belongs entirely to the Saka province is a matter to be decided by the Iranists, but I am convinced, that your arguments will hold good as far as I may judge.

(14-10-29)

**Prof. L. C. Goodrich (Columbia University.)**

Five or six years ago and again this last week Professor Louis H. Gray of this University allowed me to read two communications from you on the general subject of ancient connections between Iran and China. They seem to me to be of very considerable value and interest.

(25-11-35)

**Dr. Berthold Laufer, (Field Museum, Chicago).**

I read your three articles with keenest interest and pleasure, and believe that you have established a very convincing case in the exchange of legends between ancient Iran and China. I hope to refer in detail to your fundamental study in one of my forthcoming publications in the near future. Meanwhile please accept my best thanks for your valuable contribution to Sino-Iranian relations.

(13-11-1929)

**Prof. E. J. Rapson, (Cambridge University).**

Many thanks for your kindness in sending me copies of the three most interesting papers...I can only say that your very clear arguments, supported as they are by such cogent illustrations, appear to me convincing. You have, as far as I can judge, fully proved your point, and are to be congratulated on thus discovering a very important historical link of connexion between China and the Western World. (9-10-1929)

**Prof. H. A. Giles, (Cambridge University).**

The three sets of papers which you have been kind enough to forward to me are interesting and

valuable.....I have learnt from you a great deal about the Saka race and other facts of gerat interest to me. (19–9–1929)

**Dr. V. Lesný**, (in the *Archiv Orientální*, Prague).

I would like to call attention to a very interesting paper of Sir J. C. Coyajee, "The supposed sculpture of Zoroaster on the Taq-i-Bustan" published quite recently. The learned Parsi is of opinion that the figure cannot represent Zarathushtra. If Sir J. C. Coyajee is right, and I think he is, in identification of the radiated figure with the angel Bahram, the modern representation of Zarathushtra is based on misunderstanding and we may only hope that Iranian archæology will present us in some happy hour with a real figure of Zarathushtra. (June, 1929)